

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Pope, during his lifetime, was acclaimed as one of the great English poets, but soon after his death changing taste began to dismiss him as merely an accomplished versifier content to discuss trivialities or to abuse his contemporaries These critical attacks were inspired by a general dislike of his character rather than by an unbiased consideration of his work But modern scholars have done much to re-establish him among the great poets

The present selection is designed to show in a small compass every aspect of his genius His most popular poem, *The Rape of the Lock*, is printed entire, but so also are the greater but less well-known poems, the *Moral Essays* His other long and important poems and his translations are represented by notable passages, and many of his shorter occasional verses are included The text is that first published by the poet's friend and executor, William Warburton, and wherever possible Pope's own notes have been retained The selection is preceded by a general and biographical introduction

THE PENGUIN POEIS
D14
POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

POEMS OF
ALEXANDER POPE

SELECTED AND EDITED BY
DOUGLAS GRANT

PENGUIN BOOKS
HARMONDSWORTH MIDDLESEX

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The date given after each poem is that
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INTRODUCTION

NOTHING stays constant, and literary fame least of all. Poets who blaze vividly to their contemporaries often decline into obscurity, others assume their full strength only after long years of neglect, and some have their brilliance transiently obscured by clouds of perverse and malignant criticism. No poet has been more afflicted by such clouds than Alexander Pope who, enjoying unparalleled praise while he lived, suffered denigration after his death, particularly at the hands of nineteenth-century critics. Their judgments have now been reversed, and he is recognized again as the great poet his contemporaries acclaimed him to be. This rank he achieved in spite of many disadvantages. An only child, he was born to elderly parents in 1688. His father, having acquired some fortune in trade and professing Roman Catholicism, retired shortly after his son's birth to Binfield, in Windsor Forest, to enjoy in tranquillity the pleasures his competence could bring and to escape the troublesome civic disadvantages his faith entailed. There Pope's education began. He was a weak but precocious child and took naturally to study. He soon began to write verses of his own, and late in life when he looked back to his youth, he fondly exclaimed, 'I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.' Thus from the start he was preoccupied with and practised poetry, and his father wisely encouraged him. What plans for tragedies, epics and romances went through the boy's head are now subjects for conjecture, but the ambition to excel in that art began then and remained constant.

Secluded Binfield offered little scope for a youth who soon became confident in his powers, and from the early age of seventeen he began to frequent those London coffee-houses distinguished for the informal societies of literati which gathered there. Pope justified his introduction into

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this new and invigorating world by handing round in manuscript poems whose quality aroused praise and patronage These were the *Pastorals*, which – though they were not published until 1709 – he had begun to write at sixteen The gifts they displayed were enough to arrest the attention of the most sophisticated critics The *Pastorals*, wrote Dr Johnson, exhibited ‘a series of versification, which had in English poetry no precedent, nor has since had an imitation’

The taste for pastorals has long since become jaded, and such poems are considered to be ‘artificial’ and, consequently, unnecessary There is, however, no surer way to revive this taste than by reading Pope’s *Pastorals* They show a rare delicacy of feeling and perception Pope had an almost tremulous awareness of the changing grace of the earth, and an eye for particular beauties that has seldom been matched for sharpness

Now sleeping flocks on their soft fleeces lie,
The moon, serene in glory, mounts the sky

The verbal felicity of this couplet, the striking image in the first line, and the quiet loveliness of the picture called up, would be difficult to equal in many young poets Other remarkable qualities are revealed in these poems Pope showed his ability to suggest – in a manner not dissimilar to Thomas Bewick in his woodcuts – a whole picture in a line or two Thus, when he writes

Oft' on the rind I carv'd her am'rous vows,
While she with garlands hung the bending boughs,

the lovers are presented to the imagination in detail The power Pope had to extract the essence of a scene or character was to become more pronounced in his later

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poems There is also the craftsmanship of the verse itself, and that may be seen in couplets such as this

As some sad Turtle his lost love deplores,
And with deep murmurs fills the sounding shores

The *Pastorals* have a decorous charm, as indeed the convention demanded they should have, and – though Pope's verse as yet showed little knowledge of the world – they are remarkable first poems, which still stand among the foremost of their kind

This was an auspicious beginning to his career, but though these poems were enough to make his mark upon contemporary critics, they were hardly sufficient to raise him far above other promising candidates for fame. Some more substantial and original work was required were he to acquire distinction. The same year as the *Pastorals* were published, he wrote his first great poem. He was then, it is worth remembering, but twenty. This was the *Essay on Criticism*. He attempted in the *Essay* to set out rules for good composition and good criticism, to display his learning in both English and classical literatures, and, in short, to speak on his art in an authoritative voice – since it is that voice which wins a hearing and respect. He did not intend that the rules he announced should be considered as his own discovery, as many later critics have wrongly supposed, but he would have claimed to have been the first to have methodized the evidence of earlier poets and critics into a comprehensive and intelligible system. The strength and breadth of the poem is manifest. Johnson asserted, that 'if he had written nothing else, it would have placed him among the first critics and the first poets'. The opening lines of the *Essay* show that the continual practice of writing had given him an almost unrivalled verbal dexterity, and reveal a wit that is unsurpassed.

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'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own

He had already learnt to express in a couplet such as this a fine thought, and to charge it at the same time with wit Once this art was mastered, he used it increasingly and effectively until his verse can be distinguished by its witty concision There is also in the *Essay* an undercurrent of spiritual perception that was absent in the *Pastorals*, and it lends strength to the rightly praised simile of the Alps, and to the moving conclusion to the first part that begins

Still green with bays each ancient Altar stands

This spiritual undercurrent could be called aspiration. There can be felt in the rhythm of the verse – in the incisive surge forward of it – the pressure of a vigorous mind forever forcing on to wider horizons of understanding 'Pope had likewise genius', wrote Johnson in his noble life of the poet, 'a mind active, ambitious, adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring, in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher, always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do' This quality of aspiration never obtrudes itself, nor exhibits itself for praise, but is always to be felt beneath the sensitive fluency of the lines

The *Essay* was published in 1711, and in the following year the first version of Pope's most famous poem appeared It was occasioned by a quarrel between the two families of Petre and Fermor Lord Petre, in a frolic, had cut off a lock of Arabella Fermor's hair, and to soothe the unkind feelings which this incident had aroused, by representing the *rape* in a comic and fantastic light, was Pope's intention The first version of the *Rape of the Lock* was in two cantos only, but in 1714 Pope published the enlarged

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version in five cantos There is no more delicate and aetherial poem in the language, and superlatives of praise have been showered upon it even by those critics most antipathetic to Pope's genius It is the epitome of his early work The felicity of the *Pastorals* has been futher refined, the wit of the *Essay* has been sharpened until it can pierce unerringly the subtlest feeling or folly, and, unlike the previous poems, it reveals a fine knowledge of character Pope had moved in society since he first came to London, and it is obvious that nothing had escaped his eye Fabrics and cosmetics, balls and routs, all the decorative luxury of his age, had been intently observed and appreciated, and the men and women who loved and joked, cried and quarrelled, in that rich setting had no less evaded his attention The London of 1714 is brought before us in all its rich trappings

Yet there is more than consummate verse and meticulous observation 'It is the most exquisite specimen of *filigree* work ever invented It is admirable in proportion as it is made of nothing,' wrote William Hazlitt with the perverseness that spices his brilliantly expressed and often profound discourses It could be claimed that the *Rape of the Lock* is made of everything Another critic, W P Ker, likened it, in a fine phrase, to 'the astral body of an heroic poem, pure form, an echo of divine music' There lies the truth The poem is heroic poetry refined until murmurs of the war for Helen, the strife of Hector and Achilles on the sun-baked plain below Troy, and the clanging of Rinaldo's bright armour, sound under the shady trees in Hampton Court and in the airs that breathe around Belinda The continual suggestion of heroic verse dignifies the quarrel over the lock and, at the same time, so risible is the comparison of great and small, invests it with humour The poem is not, however, a clever pastiche The spiritual

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undercurrent of aspiration that swirls under the *Essay* moves also through the *Rape of the Lock*, and it is this which points the wit with significance and urges it into the reader so that once heard the perfect couplets are never forgotten

' If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all

We do not look upon Belinda's face only Behind her and round her rise up the ghost faces of Helen and Angelica and Duessa — of all the women who have roused men to heroic follies or sunk them in languor — and wait upon her present beauty Similarly, when the lock has been severed by the scissors, the poet movingly exclaims

What Time would spare, from Steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!

That is no mere lamentation over a lock of hair, it is a gentle but passionate cry over all beauty wantonly destroyed These implications that underlie the poem give it strength, and, saving it from drawing-room comedy, translate it into an 'echo of divine music'

The poem was, in its revised form, an immediate success It confirmed Pope's reputation and placed him at the head of contemporary poets, but such eminence could not be separated from jealousy and calumny He himself did much to encourage the attacks made upon him Although he pretended otherwise, he was extremely sensitive to criticism, and he could never resist the temptation to retort on his critics, and from the time of the publication of the *Essay* there began a guerilla war in abuse between him and his detractors He was peculiarly open to attack His constitution had been undermined by sickness and prolonged study, and under these stresses his small body had

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grown deformed Dr Johnson, in one of the most moving and compassionate passages in his life of the poet, described him as he appeared in his middle-age ‘He was then so weak as to stand in need of perpetual female attendance, extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves When he rose, he was invested in boddice made of stiff canvas, being scarce able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat One side was contracted His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid, for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean’ It should be added, that this sickly and curved body carried a noble head with wide, vivid eyes, a sensitive, full mouth, and a countenance refined by thought and lined by suffering His physique gave his enemies opportunities for ridicule that they were not slow to take ‘Enquire for a young, short, squab gentleman, the very bow of the God of Love,’ exclaimed one, and added, with greater definiteness, that the poet’s form was that of a ‘downright monkey’ Once this abusive note had been sounded, it rang on in Pope’s ears, and, though he pretended otherwise, it hurt him so that he never forgot who first tolled and who succeeded to toll it He remembered them all and eventually retaliated with an envenomed invective that, slipping between their cudgel blows, poniarded them with deft and deadly art

These controversies ruffled but could scarcely shake his peace Famous and caressed by the great, he enjoyed favours few poets have experienced, but though his poetry had won him fame, it had not given him the financial independence without which it could not peacefully be enjoyed

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To secure the independence that he longed for – and no poet has hated more than Pope dependence upon casual patronage – he issued in 1713 proposals for a translation into English verse of Homer's *Iliad*. His great friends rallied to his support, and soon a large number of subscribers were found to encourage the poet in his task. The first volume was issued in 1715 and the last in 1720. During these years Pope concentrated with resolute determination upon rendering into English the 16,000 lines of the Greek original, and the completed work was acclaimed at once as one of the great poems in the language ‘It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen, and its publication must therefore be considered as one of the great events in the annals of learning’, wrote Johnson, and again, ‘His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue, for since its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a series of lines so elaborately corrected, and so sweetly modulated, took possession of the publick ear, the vulgar was enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation.’ A pity that the host of succeeding minor poets copied his ‘melody’ so thoroughly, for they debased it and brought it into disrepute.

The *Iliad* and the succeeding translation of the *Odyssey* – which is but in part Pope's work – gave him the independence he coveted, from the first translation alone he made more than £5,000, which was an unprecedented sum to be earned by literary work. The money he wisely and shrewdly invested. He took, in 1718, a house at Twickenham, where he lived, except for frequent visits to the houses of his friends, until his death. There he indulged his taste for landscape gardening. He built the famous grotto that he has so lovingly described ‘It is finished with shells interspersed with pieces of looking glass in angular forms,

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and in the ceiling is a star of the same material, at which when a lamp, of an orbicular figure of thin alabaster, is hung in the middle, a thousand pointed rays glitter, and are reflected over the place. There are connected to this grotto by a narrower passage two porches with niches and seats — one towards the river of smooth stones, full of light and open, the other towards the arch of trees, rough with shells, flints and iron-ore. The grotto connected the house to its grounds, and there Pope exercised his genius. Horace Walpole, twenty years after Pope's death, described the garden ‘it was a little bit of ground of five acres, enclosed with three lanes and seeing nothing. Pope had twisted and twirled, and rhymed and harmonized this, till it appeared two or three sweet little lawns opening and opening beyond one another, and the whole surrounded with thick impenetrable woods.’ The taste and ingenuity Pope showed in gardening is like that which he showed in his poetry, in verse too, he made each phrase and image respond to his wishes and contribute all they could to a total effect.

The great translations from Homer, however, preoccupied his attention at the expense of original work. The first volume of his collected poems, published in 1717, included some hitherto unprinted pieces — notably that profound and passionate poem, *Eloisa to Abelard* — but else these years saw little of moment. By 1725, however, he had secured his independence, and he could once again devote himself to his own work. Then began his last and greatest period. Pope was the *arch-poet* — ‘to make verses was his first labour, to mend them was his last’, wrote Johnson — and with endless care he refined and polished his lines until they would admit of no improvement. He was dissatisfied until he was certain that criticism would only be blunted if directed against his poetry’s flawless and impregnable

surface His translations, though they displaced for a time his original work, encouraged his art Dr Johnson, in a passage of deep critical perception, said 'By perpetual practice, language had in his mind a systematical arrangement, having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call' To express himself could now give him little trouble, and he devoted himself to sounding a deeper note than he had attempted in his earlier verse This later poetry, in its sonority and harmonious complexity, is like a great river Its smooth and reflective surface masks the depths, and its calm breadth hides its vigorous speed, but the images, unlike the images in shallower verse that are mere surface impositions, are rooted in its depths, and the inflexions and subtleties of the rhythm, swirling yet tautly combined, are the proof of its fast current It is always contained within the channel laid down for its progress, and even when, like water boiling and striving over a weir, its passionate satire would seem to be running with almost uncontrollable turbulence, it is governed and directed on its course The later poetry is a brilliant triumph It reveals an imagination at once urgent but disciplined, a sensitivity alert to all appearances but selective, and a verbal music strong but clear

There is also a noticeable change in the character of the later poetry – a change remarked on by the poet when he said, that in this verse he had 'stoop'd to truth and moraliz'd his song' As he grew older he became increasingly pre-occupied with men and their natures No longer was he content, as he had been in the *Rape of the Lock*, to depict with delicacy and humour contemporary follies and foibles, he must now probe deeper and, uncovering the very springs of action, lash the vices that he thought debased man He was, however, first and foremost a poet, and when he 'moraliz'd his song', it did not become a censorious homily

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delivered with sincerity but without art All his poetical abilities, enriched by his years of practice as a translator, were employed to deliver a brilliant and scathing commentary upon his contemporaries 'If folly grow romantic I must paint it', he exclaimed, and this urge drove him to create that great series of characters — *Alossa*, *Narcissa*, *Timon*, *Atticus* and the others — in which he hung out the vices and follies that corrupted These characters do not refer particularly to any one great or notorious person, whose life like the path of a portentous comet was watched with avid interest by society, though Pope had often one especial person in mind, but are compounded of characteristics culled from numbers, they are the quintessences of vice Though Pope wished to moralise, he presented these characters not as a fulminating preacher would have done but as a poet, they were symbols that released his imagination and summoned up his finest poetry So when he wrote on *Cotta* and his close-fistedness, the description of the miser's mansion is as lovely and as precise as any descriptive verse ever written

Like some lone Chartreux stands the good old Hall,
Silence without, and fasts within the wall,
No rafter'd roofs with dance and tabor sound,
No noontide-bell invites the country round
Tenants with sighs the smokeless tow'rs survey,
And turn th' unwilling steeds another way

The overgrown rankness of the silent house is sharply presented, its past and happier history suggested, and the moral subtly insinuated, that the duty of wealth is to dispense hospitality This is morality transmuted into the purest poetry

Pope's first original work after the translations is also, perhaps, his greatest work The *Dunciad*, published in 1728, was his answer to all those critics and poetasters who

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had for years been snarling at his heels Their names were legion but Pope, remembering each one and noting their separate peculiarities, wove them into this extraordinary sombre masterpiece There is nothing else like it in literature Unfortunately, the notes appended to the poem are so integral to its structure and so necessary for its understanding that it cannot be included in a selection of his verse, the solemn conclusion can be separated and it is to be found here

The six years after 1730 were his most sustained creative period The *Essay on Man*, the *Moral Essays*, and many of the *Imitations of Horace*, were published The *Essay on Man*, an attempt to ' vindicate the ways of God to man ', is not a successful poem Pope was not a trained philosopher, and the subject he chose was not amenable to his genius, but the poem does contain some of his most fervent and finest poetry The magnificent apostrophe to Happiness has a pathetic sincerity that cannot fail to move almost to tears, and the valediction at the close a tenderness unsurpassed Charles Lamb wished to call up Pope from the dead to greet the poet who paid such ' divine compliments ', and this compliment to Bolingbroke is among his best The *Moral Essays*, which also examine man's nature, are, however, completely successful and count among his greatest verses His felicity of phrasing and imagery cannot be seen to better advantage than in these *Essays* Thus he addresses himself to his task in the *Characters of Women*

Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!
Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air,
Choose a firm Cloud, before it fall, and in it
Catch 'ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute

Or, he describes the fantastic, ridiculous beauty of Timon's villa

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Here Amphitrite sails through myrtle bowers,
There Gladiators fight, or die in flowers,
Unwater'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty Urn

These exquisite poems arise not only from the senses but from passion and spirit, which, like the earth's central fires, warm and nourish the fair surface

The *Imitations of Horace* occupied his last years. He chose from the Roman poet's works those satires and epistles that appealed to him by their applicability to his own time, and while translating them adapted them to suit his purposes. They could be called Pope's familiar poems, in them he approaches the reader in his proper person and with a disarming intimacy discovers his own character. 'Shut, shut the door, good John', he commands his servant in the *Prologue*, and once his privacy is thus safeguarded, he easily and frankly converses with his readers. Then he can exclaim — recollecting the host of panders his fame has brought around his door —

Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light?
Heav'n's! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has Life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?

Or, contemplating his sickness and his life of labour, he can pass this pathetic comment

The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not Wife,
To help me through this long disease, my Life

The *Imitations* have not the rare, elaborate beauty of the *Moral Essays* but they speak with a fine simplicity and clarity, and they have passages of unequalled satirical brilliance

The *Imitations* formed a fitting conclusion to his life

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'He died in the evening of the thirtieth day of May, 1744, so placidly, that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration' So Dr Johnson described the death of one of England's greatest poets Faults there were in his life that are difficult to dispose of, the childish deceits he practised were many, and they recoiled upon him when they were unearthed after his death and used to blacken his memory, but they were venial It is not those that his censorious editors and biographers should have remembered, but his qualities and his aspirations He remains, as he will always remain, the great example of devotion to an ideal, perfection, which he missed more narrowly than almost any other poet His poetry, chaste but passionate, disciplined but imaginative, gay but profound, is of a quality as rare and lovely as his own Happiness - a 'Plant of celestial seed'

NOTE

The text of the poems is that which William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, Pope's friend and executor, first published in 1751. The text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is printed from the first editions of those translations. The poems need annotation in many places, and Pope, aware of this, commented upon the obscurest passages. His notes, as far as possible, have been retained, and are distinguished with a *P*.

D G

1950

SPRING

THE FIRST PASTORAL, OR DAMON

TO SIR WILLIAM TRUMBALL¹

FIRST in these fields I try the sylvan strains,
Nor blush to sport on Windsor's blissful plains
Fair Thames, flow gently from thy sacred spring,
While on thy banks Sicilian Muses sing,
Let vernal airs through trembling osiers play,
And Albion's cliffs resound the rural lay

You that, too wise for pride, too good for pow'r,
Enjoy the glory to be great no more,
And, carrying with you all the world can boast,
To all the world illustriously are lost!
O let my Muse her slender reed inspire,
Till in your native shades you tune the lyre
So when the Nightingale to rest removes,
The Thrush may chant to the forsaken groves,
But, charm'd to silence, listens while she sings,
And all th' aerial audience clap their wings

Soon as the flocks shook off the nightly dews,
Two Swains, whom Love kept wakeful, and the Muse,
Pour'd o'er the whitening vale their fleecy care,
Fresh as the morn, and as the season fair
The dawn now blushing on the mountain's side,
Thus Daphnis spoke, and Strephon thus reply'd

DAPHNIS Hear how the birds, on ev'ry bloomy spray,
With joyous music wake the dawning day!
Why sit we mute, when early linnets sing,
When warbling Philomel salutes the spring?

1 Sir William Trumbull (1639–1716), a retired statesman and a friend of Pope's

Why sit we sad when Phosphor¹ shines so clear,
And lavish Nature paints the purple year?

STREPHON Sing then, and Damon shall attend the strain,
While yon' slow oxen turn the furrow'd plain
Here the bright clocus and blue vi'let glow,
Here western winds on breathing roses blow
I'll stake yon' lamb, that near the fountain plays,
And from the brink his dancing shade surveys

DAPHNIS And I this bowl, where wanton ivy twines,
And swelling clusters bend the curling vines
Four figures rising from the work appear,
The various seasons of the rowling year,
And what is that, which binds the radiant sky,
Where twelve fair signs in beauteous order lie?

DAMON Then sing by turns, by turns the Muses sing,
Now hawthorns blossom, now the daisies spring,
Now leaves the trees, and flow'rs adorn the ground
Begin, the vales shall ev'ry note rebound

STREPHON Inspire me, Phoebus, in my Delia's praise,
With Waller's² strains, or Granville's³ moving lays!
A milk-white bull shall at your altars stand,
That threatens a fight, and spurns the rising sand

DAPHNIS O Love! for Sylvia let me gain the prize,
And make my tongue victorious as her eyes,
No lambs or sheep for victims I'll impart,
Thy victim, Love, shall be the shepherd's heart

STREPHON Me gentle Delia beckons from the plain,
Then hid in shades, eludes her eager swain,
But feigns a laugh, to see me search around,
And by that laugh the willing fair is found

¹ Phosphor the planet Venus when she appears as a morning star

² Edmund Waller (1606-87), the poet whose polished verses inspired Pope to imitation

³ George Granville, Baron Lansdowne (1667-1735), poet, dramatist, and an early patron of Pope

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DAPHNIS The sprightly Sylvia trips along the green,
She runs, but hopes she does not run unseen,
While a kind glance at her pursuer flies,
How much at variance are her feet and eyes!

SIREPHON O'er golden sands let rich Pactolus flow,
And trees weep amber on the banks of Po,
Blest Thames's shores the brightest beauties yield,
Feed here, my lambs, I'll seek no distant field

DAPHNIS Celestial Venus haunts Idalia's groves,
Diana Cynthus, Ceres Hybla loves,
It Windsor-shades delight the matchless maid,
Cynthus and Hybla yield to Windsor-shade

STREPHON All nature mourns, the skies relent in show'rs,
Hush'd are the birds, and clos'd the drooping flow'rs,
If Delia smile, the flow'rs begin to spring,
The skies to brighten, and the birds to sing

DAPHNIS All nature laughs, the groves are fresh and fair,
The Sun's mild lustre warms the vital air,
If Sylvia smiles, new glories gild the shore,
And vanquish'd nature seems to charm no more

STREPHON In spring the fields, in autumn hills I love,
At morn the plains, at noon the shady grove,
But Delia always, absent from her sight,
Nor plains at morn, nor groves at noon delight

DAPHNIS Sylvia's like autumn ripe, yet mild as May,
More bright than noon, yet fresh as early day,
Ev'n spring displeases, when she shines not here,
But blest with her, 'tis spring throughout the year

STREPHON Say, Daphnis, say, in what glad soil appears,
A wond'rous Tree that sacred Monarchs bears²¹
Tell me but this, and I'll disclaim the prize,
And give the conquest to thy Sylvia's eyes

1 An allusion to the royal oak, in which Charles II had been hid from the pursuit after the battle of Worcester P

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

DAPHNIS Nay, tell me first, in what more happy fields
The Thistle springs, to which the Lily yields ¹
And then a nobler prize I will resign,
For Sylvia, charming Sylvia shall be thine

DAMON Cease to contend, for, Daphnis, I decree,
The bowl to Strephon, and the lamb to thee
Blest Swains, whose Nymphs in ev'ry grace excel,
Blest Nymphs, whose Swains those graces sing so well!
Now rise, and haste to yonder woodbine bow'rs,
A soft retreat from sudden vernal show'rs,
The turf with rural dainties shall be crown'd,
While op'ning blooms diffuse their sweets around
For see! the gath'ring flocks to shelter tend,
And from the Pleiads fruitful show'rs descend

SUMMER

THE SECOND PASTORAL, OR ALEXIS

TO DR GARTH²

A SHEPHERD's Boy (he seeks no better name)
Led forth his flocks along the silver Thame,
Where dancing sunbeams on the waters play'd,
And verdant alders form'd a quiv'ring shade
Soft as he mourn'd, the streams forgot to flow,
The flocks around a dumb compassion show,
The Naiads wept in ev'ry wat'ry bow'r,
And Jove consented in a silent show'r

1 A riddle that refers to the thistle of Scotland, the device worn by Queen Anne, and to the lilies of France

2 Sir Samuel Garth (1661–1719), physician, poet, and friend of Pope's He wrote a fine poem, *The Dispensary*

PASTORALS

Accept, O GARTH! the Muse's early lays,
That adds this wreath of Ivy to thy Bays,
Hear what from Love unpractis'd hearts endure,
From Love, the sole disease thou canst not cure

Ye shady beeches, and ye cooling streams,
Defence from Phoebus', not from Cupid's beams,
To you I mourn, nor to the deaf I sing,
The woods shall answer, and their echo ring
The hills and rocks attend my doleful lay,
Why art thou prouder and more hard than they?
The bleating sheep with my complaints agree,
They parch'd with heat, and I inflam'd by thee
The sultry Sirius burns the thirsty plains,
While in thy heart eternal winter reigns

Where stray ye, Muses, in what lawn or grove,
While your Alexis pines in hopeless love?
In those fair fields where sacred Isis glides,
Or else where Cam his winding vales divides?
As in the crystal spring I view my face,
Fresh rising blushes paint the wat'ry glass,
But since those graces please thy eyes no more,
I shun the fountains which I sought before
Once I was skill'd in ev'ry herb that grew,
And ev'ry plant that drinks the morning dew,
Ah wretched shepherd, what avails thy art,
To cure thy lambs, but not to heal thy heart!

Let other swains attend the rural care,
Feed fairer flocks, or richer fleeces sheer
But nigh yon' mountain let me tune my lays,
Embrace my Love, and bind my brows with bays.
That flute is mine which Colin's tuneful breath
Inspir'd when living, and bequeath'd in death,
He said, 'Alexis, take this pipe, the same
That taught the groves my Rosalinda's name;'

But now the reeds shall hang on yonder tree,
 For ever silent, since despis'd by thee
 Oh! were I made by some transforming pow'r
 The captive bird that sings within thy bow'r!
 Then might my voice thy list'ning ears employ,
 And I those kisses he receives, enjoy

And yet my numbers please the rural throng,
 Rough Satyrs dance, and Pan applauds the song
 The Nymphs, forsaking ev'ry cave and spring,
 Their early fruit, and milk-white turtles bring'
 Each am'rous nymph prefers her gifts in vain,
 On you their gifts are all bestow'd again
 For you the swains the fairest flow'r's design,
 And in one garland all their beauties join,
 Accept the wreath which you deserve alone,
 In whom all beauties are compriz'd in one

See what delights in sylvan scenes appear!
 Descending Gods have found Elysium here
 In woods bright Venus with Adonis stray'd,
 And chaste Diana haunts the forest-shade
 Come, lovely nymph, and bless the silent hours,
 When swains from sheering seek their nightly bow'r's;
 When weary reapers quit the sultry field,
 And crown'd with corn their thanks to Ceres yield
 This harmless grove no lurking viper hides,
 But in my breast the serpent Love abides
 Here bees from blossoms sip the rosy dew,
 But your Alexis knows no sweets but you
 Oh deign to visit our forsaken seats,
 The mossy fountains, and the green retreats!
 Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade,
 Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade
 Where'er you tread, the blushing flow'r's shall rise,
 And all things flourish where you turn your eyes

PASTORALS

Oh! how I long with you to pass my days,
Invoke the Muses, and resound your praise!
Your praise the birds shall chant in ev'ry grove,
And winds shall waft it to the pow'rs above
But would you sing, and rival Orpheus' strain,
The wond'ring forests soon should dance again,
The moving mountains hear the pow'rful call,
And headlong streams hang list'ning in their fall!

But see, the shepherds shun the noon-day heat,
The lowing herds to murmur'ring brooks retreat,
To closer shades the panting flocks remove,
Ye Gods! and is there no relief for Love?
But soon the sun with milder rays descends
To the cool ocean, where his journey ends
On me love's fiercer flames for ever prey,
By night he scorches, as he burns by day

AUTUMN

THE THIRD PASTORAL, OR HYLAS AND AEGON

TO MR WYCHERLEY¹

BENEATH the shade a spreading Beech displays,
Hylas and Aegon sung their rural lays,
This mourn'd a faithless, that an absent Love,
And Delia's name and Doris' fill'd the Grove
Ye Mantuan nymphs, your sacred succour bring,
Hylas and Aegon's rural lays I sing

Thou, whom the Nine with Plautus' wit inspire,
The art of Terence, and Menander's fire,

1 William Wycherley (1640?-1716), the dramatist and a friend of Pope's

POEMS OF ALFAXANDER POPE

Whose sense instructs us, and whose humour charms,
Whose judgment sways us, and whose spirit warms!
Oh, skill'd in Nature! see the hearts of Swains,
Then artless passions, and their tender pains

Now setting Phoebus shone serenely bright,
And fleecy clouds were streak'd with purple light,
When tuneful Hylas, with melodious moan,
Taught rocks to weep, and made the mountains groan

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
To Delia's ear the tender notes convey
As some sad Turtle his lost love deplores,
And with deep murmurs fills the sounding shores,
Thus, far from Delia, to the winds I mourn,
Alike unheard, unpity'd, and forlorn

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along!
For her, the feather'd choirs neglect their song
For her, the limes their pleasing shades deny,
For her, the lilies hang their heads and die
Ye flow'rs that droop, forsaken by the spring,
Ye birds that, left by summer, cease to sing,
Ye trees that fade when autumn-heats remove,
Say, is not absence death to those who love?

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
Curs'd be the fields that cause my Delia's stay,
Fade ev'ry blossom, wither ev'ry tree,
Die ev'ry flow'r, and perish all, but she
What have I said? Where'er my Delia flies,
Let spring attend, and sudden flow'rs arise,
Let op'ning roses knotted oaks adorn,
And liquid amber drop from ev'ry thorn

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along!
The birds shall cease to tune their ev'ning song,
The winds to breathe, the waving woods to move,
And streams to murmur, e'er I cease to love

PASTORALS

Not bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,
Not balmy sleep to lab' ers faint with pain,
Not show'rs to larks, or sunshine to the bee,
Are half so charming as thy sight to me

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
Come, Delia, come, ah, why this long delay?
Thro' rocks and caves the name of Delia sounds,
Delia, each cave and echoing rock rebounds
Ye pow'rs, what pleasing frenzy soothes my mind?
Do lovers dream, or is my Delia kind?
She comes, my Delia comes! — Now cease my lay,
And cease, ye gales, to bear my sighs away!

Next Aegon sung, while Windsor groves admir'd,
Rehearse, ye Muses, what yourselves inspir'd

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strain!
Of perjur'd Doris, dying I complain
Here, where the mountains, less'ning as they rise,
Lose the low vales, and steal into the skies
While lab'ring oxen, spent with toil and heat,
In their loose traces from the field retreat
While curling smokes from village tops are seen,
And the fleet shades glide o'er the dusky green

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
Beneath yon' poplar oft we past the day
Oft' on the rind I carv'd her am'rous vows,
While she with garlands hung the bending boughs:
The garlands fade, the vows are worn away,
So dies her love, and so my hopes decay

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strain!
Now bright Arcturus glads the teeming grain,
Now golden fruits on loaded branches shine,
And grateful clusters swell with floods of wine,
Now blushing berries paint the yellow grove,
Just Gods! shall all things yield returns but love?

POLMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
The shepherds cry, 'Thy flocks are left a prey -
Ah! what avails it me, the flocks to keep,
Who lost my heart while I preserv'd my sheep
Pan came, and ask'd, what magic caus'd my smart,
Or what ill eyes malignant glances dart?
What eyes but hers, alas, have pow'r to move?
And is there magic but what dwells in love?

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strains!
I'll fly from shepherds, flocks, and flow'ry plains
From shepherds, flocks, and plains, I may remove,
Forsake mankind, and all the world - but love!
I know thee, Love! on foreign mountains bred,
Wolves gave thee suck, and savage tigers fed
Thou wert from Aethra's burning entrails torn,
Got by fierce whirlwinds, and in thunder born!

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
Farewell, ye woods, adieu, the light of day!
One leap from yonder cliff shall end my pains,
No more, ye hills, no more resound my strains!

Thus sung the shepherds till th' approach of night,
The skies yet blushing with departing light,
When falling dews with spangles deck'd the glade,
And the low sun had lengthen'd ev'ry shade

WINTER

THE FOURTH PASTORAL, OR DAPHNE
TO THE MEMORY OF MRS TEMPEST¹

LYCIDAS Thyrsis, the music of that murmur'ring spring
Is not so mournful as the strains you sing

¹ Mrs Tempest (d. 1703) was the friend of Pope's early friend and adviser William Walsh (1663-1708), the critic

PASTORALS

Nor rivers winding thro' the vales below,
So sweetly warble, or so smoothly flow
Now sleeping flocks on their soft fleeces lie,
The moon, serene in glory, mounts the sky,
While silent birds forget their tuneful lays,
Oh sing of Daphne's fate, and Daphne's praise!

THYRSIS Behold the groves that shine with silver frost,
Their beauty wither'd, and their verdure lost
Here shall I try the sweet Alexis' strain,
That call'd the list'ning Dryads to the plain?
Thames heard the numbers as he flow'd along,
And bade his willows learn the moving song

LYCIDAS So may kind rains their vital moisture yield,
And swell the future harvest of the field
Begin, this charge the dying Daphne gave,
And said, 'Ye shepherds, sing around my grave'
Sing, while beside the shaded tomb I mourn,
And with fresh bays her rural shrine adorn

THYRSIS Ye gentle Muses, leave your crystal spring,
Let Nymphs and Sylvans cypress garlands bring,
Ye weeping Loves, the stream with myrtles hide,
And break your bows, as when Adonis died,
And with your golden darts, now useless grown,
Inscribe a verse on this relenting stone
'Let nature change, let heav'n and earth deplore,
Fair Daphne's dead, and love is now no more'
'Tis done, and nature's various charms decay,
See gloomy clouds obscure the chearful day!
Now hung with pearls the dropping trees appear,
Their faded honours scatter'd on her bier
See, where on earth the flow'ry glories lie,
With her they flourish'd, and with her they die
Ah what avail the beauties Nature wore?
Fair Daphne's dead, and beauty is no more!

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

For her the flocks refuse their verdant food,
The thirsty heifers shun the gliding flood,
The silver swans her hapless fate bemoan,
In notes more sad than when they sing their own,
In hollow caves sweet Echo silent lies,
Silent, or only to her name replies,
Her name with pleasure once she taught the shore,
Now Daphne's dead, and pleasure is no more!

No grateful dews descend from ev'ning skies,
Nor morning odours from the flow'rs arise;
No rich perfumes refresh the fruitful field,
Nor fragrant herbs their native incense yield
The balmy Zephyrs, silent since her death,
Lament the ceasing of a sweeter breath,
Th' industrious bees neglect their golden store!
Fair Daphne's dead, and sweetness is no more!

No more the mounting larks, while Daphne sings,
Shall list'ning in mid air suspend their wings,
No more the birds shall imitate her lays,
Or hush'd with wonder, hearken from the sprays
No more the streams their murmurs shall forbear,
A sweeter music than their own to hear,
But tell the reeds, and tell the vocal shore,
Fair Daphne's dead, and music is no more!

Her fate is whisper'd by the gentle breeze,
And told in sighs to all the trembling trees,
The trembling trees, in ev'ry plain and wood,
Her fate remurmur to the silver flood,
The silver flood, so lately calm, appears
Swell'd with new passion, and o'erflows with tears,
The winds, and trees, and floods her death deplore,
Daphne, our grief! our glory now no more!

But see! where Daphne wond'ring mounts on high
Above the clouds, above the starry sky!

PASTORALS

Eternal beauties grace the shining scene,
Fields ever fresh, and groves for ever green!
There while you rest in Amaranthine bow'rs,
Or from those meads select unfading flow'rs,
Behold us kindly, who your name implore,
Daphne, our Goddess, and our grief no more!

LYCIDAS How all things listen, while thy Muse complains!

Such silence waits on Philomela's strains,
In some still ev'ning, when the whisp'ring breeze
Pants on the leaves, and dies upon the trees
To thee, bright goddess, oft a lamb shall bleed,
If teeming ewes increase my fleecy breed
While plants their shade, or flow'rs their odours give,
Thy name, thy honour, and thy praise shall live!

THYRSIS But see, Orion sheds unwholesome dews,
Arise, the pines a noxious shade diffuse,
Sharp Boreas blows, and Nature feels decay,
Time conquers all, and we must Time obey
Adieu, ye vales, ye mountains, streams, and groves,
Adieu, ye shepherds' rural lays, and loves,
Adieu, my flocks, farewell, ye sylvan crew,
Daphne, farewell, and all the world, adieu!

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Each might his sev'ral province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand

First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same
Unering NATURE, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides,
In some fair body thus th' informing soul
With spirits feeds, with vigour fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains,
Itself unseen, but in th' effects remains
Some, to whom Heav'n in wit has been profuse,
Want as much more to turn it to its use,
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
Tho' meant each other's aid, like man and wife
'Tis more to guide, than spur the Muse's steed,
Restrain his fury, than provoke his speed,
The winged courser, like a gen'rous horse,
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.

Those RULES of old discover'd, not devis'd,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd,
Nature, like Liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same Laws which first herself ordain'd

Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress, and when indulge our flights:
High on Parnassus' top her sons she show'd,
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod,
Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,
And urg'd the rest by equal steps to rise
Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,
She drew from them what they deriv'd from Heav'n

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

The gen'rous Critic fann'd the Poet's fire,
And taught the world with Reason to admire
Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid prov'd,
To dress her charms, and make her more belov'd
But following wits from that intention stray'd,
Who could not win the mistress, woo'd the maid,
Against the Poets their own arms they turn'd,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learn'd.
So modern 'Pothecaries, taught the art,
By Doctor's bills to play the Doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools
Some on the leaves of ancient authors piey,
Nor time nor moths e'er spoil'd so much as they
Some drily plain, without invention's aid,
Write dull receipts, how poems may be made
These leave the sense, their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.

You, then, whose judgment the right course would
steer,

Know well each ANCIENT's proper character,
His Fable, Subject, scope in ev'ry page,
Religion, Country, genius of his Age,
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticize
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night,
Thenceform your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring
Still with itself compar'd, his text peruse,
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.

When first young Maro¹ in his boundless mind,
A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd,

1. Virgil – whose family name was Maro – (70–19 B C), the Roman poet. His birth-place was Mantua

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Perhaps he seem'd above the Critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountain scorn'd to draw
But when t' examine ev'ry part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same
Convinc'd, amaz'd, he checks the bold design,
And rules as strict his labour'd work confine,
As if the Stagirite¹ o'erlook'd each line
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem,
To copy nature is to copy them

Some beauties yet no Precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care
Music resembles Poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach
If, where the rules not far enough extend,
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)
Some lucky licence answer to the full
Th' intent propos'd, that licence is a rule
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track,
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which without passing through the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,
Which out of nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice
Great Wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true Critics dare not mend,
But tho' the Ancients thus their rules invade,
(As Kings dispense with laws themselves have made)
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its End,

1 Aristotle — who was born at Stagyra — (384–22 b c), the great Greek philosopher who wrote upon the art of poetry

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

Let it be seldom, and compell'd by need,
And have, at least, their precedent to plead
The Critic else proceeds without remorse,
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force

I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts,
Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults
Some figures monstrous and mis-shaped appear,
Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportion'd to their light, or place,
Due distance reconciles to form and grace
A prudent chief not always must display
His pow'rs in equal ranks, and fair array,
But with th' occasion and the place comply,
Conceal his force, nay seem sometimes to fly
Those oft are stratagems which errors seem,
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream

Still green with bays each ancient Altar stands,
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands,
Secure from Flames, from Envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive War, and all-involving Age
See from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!
Hear, in all tongues consenting Paeans ring!
In praise so just let ev'ry voice be join'd,
And fill the gen'ral chorus of mankind
Hail, Bards triumphant! born in happier days,
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow,
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
O may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire,
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights;
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes)

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

To teach vain Wits a science little known,
To admire superior sense, and doubt their own!

II

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is *Pride*, the never-failing vice of fools
Whatever Nature has in worth deny'd,
She gives in large recruits of needful Pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with
wind

Pride, where Wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty Void of sense
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day
Trust not yourself, but your defects to know,
Make use of ev'ry friend — and ev'ry foe

A *little learning* is a dang'rous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again
Fir'd at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of Arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But, more advanc'd, behold with strange surprise,
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleas'd at first the tow'ring Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last:

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

But, those attain'd, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthen'd way,
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

A perfect Judge will read each work of Wit
With the same spirit that its author writ
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind,
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The gen'rous pleasure to be charm'd with wit
But in such lays as neither ebb nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep,
We cannot blame indeed – but we may sleep
In Wit, as Nature, what affects our hearts
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts,
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all
Thus when we view some well-proportion'd dome,
(The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!)
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to th' admiring eyes,
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear,
The Whole at once is bold, and regular.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be
In ev'ry work regard the writer's End,
Since none can compass more than they intend,
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spight of trivial faults, is due
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,
T' avoid great errors, must the less commit
Neglect the rules each verbal Critic lays,
For not to know some trifles is a praise

POEMS OF ALFAXANDER POPE

Most Critics, fond of some subservient art,
Still make the Whole depend upon a Part
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one lov'd Folly sacrifice

Some to *Conceit* alone their taste confine,
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line,
Pleas'd with a work where nothing's just or fit,
One glaring Chaos and wild heap of wit
Poets, like painters, thus, unskill'd to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art
True Wit is Nature to advantage dress'd,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd,
Something, whose truth convinc'd at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit
For works may have more wit than does 'em good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood

Others for *Language* all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress
Their praise is still, — 'The Style is excellent,'
The Sense, they humbly take upon content
Words are like leaves, and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found
False Eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colours spreads on ev'ry place,
The face of Nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay,
But true Expression, like th' unchanging Sun,
Clears, and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none]

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable,
A vile conceit in pompous words express'd,
Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd
For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,
As sev'ral garbs with country, town, and court
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense,
Such labour'd nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the learned smile

• • •

In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold,
Alike fantastic, if too new, or old
Be not the first by whom the new are try'd,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside

But most by Numbers judge a Poet's song,
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong
In the bright Muse, tho' thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire,
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds, as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there }
These equal syllables alone require,
Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire,
While expletives their feeble aid do join,
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line
While they ring round the same unvary'd chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes,
Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,'
In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees'
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep',
The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with 'sleep'-
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow,
And praise the easy vigour of a line,
Where Denham's¹ strength and Waller's² sweetness
join

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an Echo to the sense,
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow,
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main
Hear how Timotheus' vary'd lays surprise,³
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While at each change, the son of Lybian Jove
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love,
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the World's victor stood subdued by Sound!
The power of Music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is DRYDEN now

1 Sir John Denham (1615-69), the poet who wrote the famous descriptive poem, *Cooper's Hill*

2 See p. 2, n. 2

3 Timotheus is the musician described playing before Alexander the Great in John Dryden's ode, *Alexander's Feast*

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

Avoid Extremes, and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleas'd too little or too much.
At ev'ry trifle scorn to take offence
That always shows great pride, or little sense,
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest
Yet let not each gay Turn thy rapture move,
For fools admire, but men of sense approve
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify

Some foreign writers, some our own despise,
The Ancients only, or the Moderns prize
Thus Wit, like Faith, by each man is apply'd
To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last,
Tho' each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days
Regard not then if Wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true

Some ne'er advance a Judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the Town;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd, the worst is he
That in proud dulness joins with Quality,
A constant Critic at the great man's board,
To fetch and carry nonsense for my Lord

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer, or me?
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the stile refines!
Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!

The Vulgar thus through Imitation err,
As oft the Learn'd by being singular
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong
So Schismatics the plain believers quit,
And a'e but damn'd for having too much wit
Some praise at morning what they blame at night,
But always think the last opinion right
A Muse by these is like a mistress us'd,
This hour she's idoliz'd, the next abus'd,
While their weak heads, like towns unfortify'd,
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side
Ask them the cause, they're wiser still, they say,
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow,
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so
Once School-divines this zealous isle o'erspread,
Who knew most Sentences, was deepest read,
Faith, Gospel, all, seem'd made to be disputed,
And none had sense enough to be confuted
Scotists and Thomists, now, in peace remain,¹
Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck-lane²
If Faith itself has diff'rent dresses worn,
What wonder modes in Wit should take their turn?

1 Two differing theological schools headed by St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) and Duns Scotus (1265?–1308?).

2 A place where old and second-hand books were sold formerly, near Smithfield P

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

Oft, leaving what is natural and fit,
The current folly proves the ready wit,
And authors think their reputation safe,
Which lives as long as tools are pleas'd to laugh

Some valuing those of their own side or mind,
Still make themselves the measure of mankind
Fondly we think we honour merit then,
When we but praise ourselves in other men
Parties in Wit attend on those of State,
And public faction doubles private hate
Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,
In various shapes of Parsons, Critics, Beaus,
But sense surviv'd, when merry jests were past,
For rising merit will buoy up at last
Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,
New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise ¹
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,
Zoilus² again would start up from the dead
Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue,
But like a shadow, proves the substance true,
For envy'd Wit, like Sol eclips'd, makes known
Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own
When first that sun too pow'rful beams displays,
It draws up vapours which obscure its rays,
But ev'n those clouds at last adorn its way,
Reflect new glories, and augment the day

Be thou the first true merit to befriend,
His praise is lost, who stays 'till all commend
Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes

1 Sir Richard Blackmore (d. 1729), physician The Rev. Luke Milbourne (1649–1720) Both these were detractors of Dryden and dull poets

2 Zoilus, a malignant critic of Homer

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

No longer now that golden age appears,
When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years
Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast,
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be
So when the faithful pencil has design'd
Some bright Idea of the master's mind,
Where a new world leaps out at his command,
And ready Nature waits upon his hand,
When the ripe colours soften and unite,
And sweetly melt into just shade and light,
When mellowing years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure just begins to live,
The treach'rous colours the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away!

Unhappy Wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-liv'd vanity is lost
Like some fair flow'r the early spring supplies,
That gaily blooms, but ev'n in blooming dies
What is this Wit, which must our cares employ?
The owner's wife, that other men enjoy,
Then most our trouble still when most admir'd,
And still the more we give, the more requir'd,
Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please;
'Tis what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,
By fools 'tis hated, and by knaves undone!

If Wit so much from Ign'rance undergo,
Ah let not Learning too commence its foe!
Of old, those met rewards who could excel,
And such were prais'd who but endeavour'd well:

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

Though triumphs were to gen'als only due,
Crowns were reserv'd to grace the soldiers too
Now, they who reach Parmassus' lofty crown,
Employ their pains to spurn some others down,
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,
Contending wits become the sport of fools
But still the worst with most regret commend,
For each ill Author is as bad a Friend
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urg'd through sacred lust of praise!
Ah ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,
Nor in the Critic let the Man be lost
Good-nature and good-sense must ever join,
To err is human, to forgive, divine

But if in noble minds some dregs remain,
Not yet purg'd off, of spleen and sour disdain,
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times
No pardon vile Obscenity should find,
Though wit and art conspire to move your mind,
But Dulness with Obscenity must prove
As shameful sure as Impotence in love
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,
Sprung the rank weed, and thriv'd with large increase
When love was all an easy Monarch's care,¹
Seldom at council, never in a war
Jilts rul'd the state, and statesmen farces writ,
Nay, wits had pensions, and young Lords had wit,
The Fair sat panting at a Courtier's play,
And not a Mask went unimprov'd away
The modest fan was lifted up no more,
And Virgins smil'd at what they blush'd before

¹ A reference to the times following upon the restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660.

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

The following license of a Foreign reign
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus¹ drain,
Then unbelieving Priests reform'd the nation,
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation,
Where Heav'n's free subjects might their rights dispute,
Lest God himself should seem too absolute
Pulpits their sacred satire learn'd to spare,
And Vice admir'd to find a flatt'rer there!
Encourag'd thus, Wit's Titans brav'd the skies,
And the press groan'd with licens'd blasphemies
These monsters, Critics! with your darts engage,
Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage!
Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an author into vice,
All seems infected that th' infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye

III

LEARN, then, what MORALS Critics ought to show,
For 'tis but half a Judge's task to know
'Tis not enough, taste, judgment, learning join,
In all you speak, let truth and candour shine
That not alone what to your sense is due
All may allow, but seek your friendship too

Be silent always, when you doubt your sense,
And speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence
Some positive, persisting fops we know,
Who, if once wrong, will needs be always so;
But you, with pleasure own your errors past,
And make each day a Critique on the last

'Tis not enough your counsel still be true,
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do,

1 The propounder of the heresy called Socinianism

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot
Without Good-Breeding, truth is disapprov'd,
That only makes superior sense belov'd

Be niggards of advice on no pretence,
For the worst avarice is that of sense
With mean complaisance ne'er betray your trust,
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust
Fear not the anger of the wise to raise,
Those best can bear reproof, who merit praise

'Twere well might Critics still this freedom take,
But Appius reddens at each word you speak,
And stares, tremendous, with a threat'ning eye,
Like some fierce Tyrant in old tapestry
Fear most to tax an Honourable fool,
Whose right it is, uncensur'd, to be dull,
Such, without wit, are Poets when they please,
As without learning they can take Degrees
Leave dang'rous truths to unsuccessful Satires,
And flattery to fulsome Dedicators,
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no more,
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er
'Tis best sometimes your censure to restrain,
And charitably let the dull be vain.
Your silence there is better than your spite,
For who can rail so long as they can write?
Still humming on, their drouzy course they keep,
And lash'd so long, like tops, are lash'd asleep
False steps but help them to renew the race,
As, after stumbling, Jades will mend their pace
What crowds of these, impenitently bold,
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,
Still run on Poets, in a raging vein,
Ev'n to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,
And rhyme with all the rage of Impotence!

Such shameless Bards we have, and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd Critics too
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head,
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,
And always list'ning to himself appears
All books he reads, and all he reads assails,
From Dryden's Fables down to Dufey's Tales ¹
With him most authors steal their works, or buy.
Garth did not write his own Dispensary²
Name a new play, and he's the Poet's friend,
Nay, show'd his faults — but when would Poets mend?
No place so sacred from such tops is barr'd,
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's church yard ³
Nay, fly to Altars, there they'll talk you dead
For Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,
It still looks home, and short excursions makes, }
But rattling nonsense in full vollies breaks,
And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,
Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide

But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbiass'd, or by favour, or by spite,
Not dully prepossess'd, nor blindly right,
Tho' learn'd, well-bred, and tho' well-bred, sincere,
Modestly bold, and humanly severe
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?

¹ Tom D'Urfe (1653–1723), poet and dramatist

² See p 4, n 2

³ St Paul's Cathedral was once a fashionable resort for idlers

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd,
A knowledge both of books and human kind,
Gen'rous converse, a soul exempt from pride,
And love to praise, with reason on his side?

Such once were Critics, such the happy few,
Athens and Rome in better ages knew
The mighty Stagirite first left the shore,
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore,
He steer'd securely, and discover'd fair,
Led by the light of the Maeonian star ¹
Poets, a race long unconfin'd, and free,
Still fond and proud of savage liberty,
Receiv'd his laws, and stood convinc'd 'twas fit,
Who conquer'd Nature, should preside o'er Wit.

Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
And without method talks us into sense,
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey
The truest notions in the easiest way
He who, supreme in judgment, as in wit,
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,
Yet judg'd with coolness, tho' he sung with fire;
His Precepts teach but what his works inspire.
Our Critics take a contrary extreme,
They judge with fury, but they write with phlegm:
Nor suffers Horace more in wrong Translations
By Wits, than Critics in as wrong Quotations.

Thus long succeeding Critics justly reign'd,
Licence repress'd, and useful laws ordain'd
Learning and Rome alike in empire grew,
And Arts still follow'd where her Eagles flew,
From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw Learning fall, and Rome

1 Homer.

With Tyranny then Superstition join'd,
 As that the body, this enslav'd the mind,
 Much was believ'd, but little understood,
 And to be dull was constru'd to be good,
 A second deluge Learning thus o'er-run,
 And the Monks finish'd what the Goths begun

At length Erasmus, that great injur'd name,
 (The glory of the Priesthood, and the shame!)
 Stem'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age,
 And drove those holy Vandals off the stage

But see! each Muse, in Leo's golden days,
 Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays,
 Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,
 Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head
 Then Sculpture and her sister-arts revive,
 Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live,
 With sweeter notes each rising Temple hung
 A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung ¹
 Immortal Vida on whose honour'd brow
 The Poet's bays and Critic's ivy grow,
 Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
 As next in place to Mantua,² next in fame!

But soon by impious arms from Latium chas'd,
 Their ancient bounds the banish'd Muses pass'd,
 Thence Arts o'er all the northern world advance,
 But Critic-learning flourish'd most in France
 The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys,
 And Boileau still in right of Horace sways ³
 But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despis'd,
 And kept unconquer'd, and uncivilis'd,

1 Vida, an excellent Latin poet, who writ an Art of Poetry in verse
 He flourished in the time of Leo X P

2 See p 17, n 1

3 Nicolas Boileau (1636–1711), French critic and poet

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

I once for the liberties of wit, and bold,
We still defy'd the Romans, as of old
Yet some there were, among the sounder few
Of those who less presum'd, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,
And here restor'd Wit's fundamental laws
Such was the Muse,¹ whose rules and practice tell,
'Nature's chief Masterpiece is writing well'
Such was Roscommon,² not more learn'd than good,
With manners gen'rous as his noble blood,
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And ev'ry author's merit, but his own
Such late was Walsh³ — the Muse's judge and friend,
Who justly knew to blame or to commend,
To failings mild, but zealous for desert,
The clearest head, and the sincerest heart
This humble praise, lamented shade! receive,
This praise at least a grateful Muse may give
The Muse, whose early voice you taught to sing,
Prescrib'd her heights, and prun'd her tender wing,
(Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,
But in low numbers short excursions tries
Content, if hence th' unlearn'd their wants may view,
The leain'd reflect on what before they knew
Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame,
Still pleas'd to praise, yet not afraid to blame,
Averse alike to flatter, or offend,
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend

1 The Duke of Buckingham (1648–1721), politician, poetaster, and friend of Pope's

2 Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (1633?–85), poet and critic

3 See p 10, n 1

FROM

WINDSOR-FOREST

FIELD-SPORTS

YE vig'rous swains! while youth ferments your blood,
And purer spirits swell the sprightly flood,
Now range the hills, the gameful woods beset,
Wind the shrill horn, or spread the waving net
When milder autumn summer's heat succeeds,
And in the new-shorn field the partridge feeds,
Before his lord the ready spaniel bounds,
Panting with hope, he tries the furrow'd grounds,
But when the tainted gales the game betray,
Couch'd close he lies, and meditates the prey
Secure they trust th' unfaithful field beset,
Till hov'ring o'er 'em sweeps the swelling net
Thus (if small things we may with great compare)
When Albion sends her eager sons to war,
Some thoughtless Town, with ease and plenty blest,
Near, and more near, the closing lines invest,
Sudden they seize th' amaz'd, defenceless prize,
And high in air Britannia's standard flies

See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings
Short is his joy, he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground
Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?

Nor yet, when moist Arcturus clouds the sky,
The woods and fields their pleasing toils deny

WINDSOR-FOREST

To plains with well-breath'd beagles we repair,
And trace the mazes of the circling hare
(Beasts, urg'd by us, their fellow-beasts pursue,
And learn of man each other to undo)
With slaught'ring guns th' unweared fowler roves,
When frosts have whiten'd all the naked groves,
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,
And lonely woodcocks haunt the wat'ry glade
He hits the tube, and levels with his eye,
Straight a short thunder breaks the frozen sky
Oft, as in airy rings they skim the heath,
The clam'rous lapwings feel the leaden death
Oft, as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall, and leave their little lives in air

In genial spring, beneath the quiv'ring shade,
Where cooling vapours breathe along the mead,
The patient fisher takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand
With looks unmov'd, he hopes the scaly breed,
And eyes the dancing cork, the bending reed
Our plenteous streams a various race supply,
The bright-ey'd perch with fins of Tyrian dye,
The silver eel, in shining volumes roll'd,
The yellow carp, in scales bediop'd with gold,
Swift trout, diversify'd with crimson stains,
And pykes, the tyrants of the wat'ry plains

Now Cancer glows with Phoebus' fiery car
The youth rush eager to the sylvan war,
Swarm o'er the lawns, the forest walks surround,
Rouze the fleet hart, and cheer the opening hound.
Th' impatient courser pants in ev'ry vein,
And pawing, seems to beat the distant plain
Hills, vales, and floods appear already cross'd,
And ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

See the bold youth strain up the threat'ning steep,
Rush through the thickets, down the valleys sweep,
Hang o'er their coursers' heads with eager speed,
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK
AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM
TO MRS ARABELLA FERMOR¹

MADAM,

If will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to You Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young Ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own But as it was communicated with the air of a Secret, it soon found its way into the world An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a Bookseller, you had the good-nature for my sake to consent to the publication of one more correct This I was forc'd to, before I had executed half my design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to complete it

The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the Critics, to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Demons, are made to act in a Poem For the ancient Poets are in one respect like many modern Ladies let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance These Machines I determin'd to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a Lady, but 'tis so much the concern of a Poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with The best account I know of them is in a French book call'd *Le Comte de Gabalis*, which both in its title and size is so like a Novel, that many of the Fair Sex have read it for one by mistake According, to these Gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs,

1 Lord Petre, the *Baron* of the poem, cut off a lock of Miss Arabella Fermor's hair, which occasioned a quarrel between their two families Pope, at the instigation of a mutual friend, John Caryll, wrote this poem to heal the breach

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

and Salamanders The Gnomes or Demons of Earth delight in mischief, but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the Air, are the best condition'd creatures imaginable For they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true Adepts, an in-violate preservation of Chastity

As to the following Cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous, as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the end, (except the loss of your Hair, which I always mention with reverence) The Human persons are as fictitious as the Airy ones, and the character of Belinda, as it is now manag'd, resembles you in nothing but in Beauty

If this Poem had as many Graces as there are in your Person, or in your Mind, yet I could never hope it should pass through the world half so Uncensur'd as You have done But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem,

MADAM,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A POPE

CANTO I

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing – This verse to CARYL, Muse! is due
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my lays

Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms, dwells such mighty Rage?

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Sol, through white curtains shot a tim'ous ray,
And ope'd those eyes that must eclipse the day
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian SYLPH prolong'd the balmy rest
'Twas He had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her head,
A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau,
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)
Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say
'Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air'
If e'er one Vision touch thy infant thought,
Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught,
Of airy Elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by Angel-pow'rs
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flow'rs,
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below
Some secret truths, from learned pride conceal'd,
To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd
What tho' no credit doubting Wits may give?
The Fair and Innocent shall still believe
Know then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,
The light Militia of the lower sky
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the Ring¹

1 A fashionable parade in Hyde Park

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Think what an equipage thou hast in Air,
And view with scorn two Pages and a Chair
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclos'd in Woman's beauteous mould,
Thence, by a soft transition, we repain
From earthly Vehicles to these of air
Think not, when Woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead,
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards
Her joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre, after death survive
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first Elements their Souls retire
The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name
Soft yielding minds to Water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental Tea
The graver Prude sinks downward to a Gnome,
In search of mischief still on Earth to roam
The light coquettes in Sylphs alott repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air

'Know farther yet, whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embrac'd
For Spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please
What guards the purity of melting Maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires ?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Though Honour is the word with Men below

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

'Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestin'd to the Gnomes embrace
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdain'd, and love deny'd,
Then gay Ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While Peers, and Dukes, and all their sweeping
train,

And Gaiters, Stars, and Coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, 'YOUR GRACE' salutes their ear
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young Coquettes to roll,
Teach Infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a Beau

'Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The Sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,
Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expell by new
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball ?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand ?
With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their heart,
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-
knots strive,

Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals Levity may call,
Oh, blind to truth ! the Sylphs contrive it all.

'Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I rang'd the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear Mirror of thy ruling Star
I saw, alas ! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

But heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where
Warn'd by the Sylph, oh pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!'

He said, when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and wak'd his mistress with his tongue
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a Billet-doux,
Wounds, Charms, and Ardours, were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy head

And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd,
Each silver Vase in mystic order laid
First, rob'd in white, the Nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the Cosmetic pow'rs
A heav'ly Image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears,
Th' inferior Priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear,
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box
The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckled, and the white
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux
Now awful Beauty puts on all its arms,
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face,
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes

THE RAPL OF THE LOCK

The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown,
And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own

CANTO II

NOT with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The Sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames
Fair Nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone,
But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone
On hei white breast a sparkling Cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends,
Oft she rejects, but never once offends
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all

This Nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair

Th' advent'rous Baron the bright locks admn'd;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray,
For when success a Lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attain'd his ends

For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly Love — to Love an Altar built,
Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt
There lay three garter's, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves,
With tender Billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r,
The rest, the winds dispers'd in empty air

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And soften'd sounds along the waters die,
Smooth flow the waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay
All but the Sylph — with careful thoughts opprest,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast
He summons straight his Denizens of air,
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair,
Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe,
That seem'd but Zephyrs to the train beneath
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel plac'd,
His purple pinions op'ning to the sun,
He rais'd his azure wand, and thus begun

'Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chieft give ear,
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assign'd
By laws eternal to th' aerial kind
Some in the fields of purest Ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky
Some less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of Nations own,
And guard with Arms divine the British Throne
'Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care,
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprison'd essences exhale,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs,
To steal from rainbows, e'er they drop in show'rs
A brighter wash, to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs,
Nay oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow

'This day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair
That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care,
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight,
But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw,
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade,
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade,
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball,
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall
Haste then, ye spirits! to your charge repair
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care,
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign,
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine,
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite Lock,
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock

'To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the Petticoat
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs of whale,
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around

'Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stop'd in vials, or transfix'd with pins,
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Gums and Pomatum shall his flight restrain,
While, clog'd, he beats his silken wings in vain,
Or Alum styptics with contracting pow'r
Shrink his thin essence like a rivell'd flow'r
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling Mill,
In fumes of burning Chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!

He spoke, the spirits from the sails descend,
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend,
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair,
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear,
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

CANTO III

CLOSE by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign Tyrants, and of Nymphs at home,
Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes Tea

Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court,
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last,
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen,
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes,
At ev'ry word a reputation dies

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that*
 Mean while, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray,
The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that Jury-men may dine,
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the Toilet cease
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous Knights,
At Ombre¹ singly to decide their doom,
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred Nine
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aerial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card
First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,
Then each according to the rank they bore,
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wond'rous fond of place

 Behold, four Kings in majesty rever'd,
With hoary whiskers and a fork'y beard,
And four fair Queens whose hands sustain a flow'r,
Th' expressive emblem of their softer pow'r,
Four Knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand,
And particolour'd troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain

 The skilful Nymph reviews her force with care
'Let Spades be trumps!' she said, and trumps they
 were

 Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors

1 A card game played by three players with a pack of forty cards.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Spadillo¹ first, unconquerable Lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board
As many more Manillio² forc'd to yield,
And march'd a victor from the verdant field
Him Basto³ follow'd, but his fate more hard
Gain'd but one trump and one Plebeian card
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revcal'd,
The rest, his many-colour'd robe conceal'd
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage
Ev'n mighty Pam⁴, that Kings and Queens o'er-threw
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Loo,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade!

Thus far both armies to Belinda yield,
Now to the Baron fate inclines the field
His warlike Amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades
The Club's black Tyrant first her victim dy'd,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barb'rous pride
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread,
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe?

The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace,
Th' embroider'd King who shows but half his face,
And his resplendent Queen, with pow'rs combin'd,
Of broken troops an easy conquest find
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green

1 Ace of Spades

2 Two of Spades

3 Ace of Clubs

4 Knave of Clubs

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit and of various dye,
The pierc'd battalions disunited fall,
In heaps on heaps, one fate o'erwhelms them all

The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look,
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille¹
And now, (as oft in some distemper'd State)
On one nice Trick depends the gen'ral fate
An Ace of Hearts steps forth the King unseen
Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace
The nymph, exulting, fills with shouts the sky,
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply
O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate
Sudden these honours shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this victorious day

For lo' the board with cups and spoons is
crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round,
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp, the fiery spirits blaze
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide
At once they gratify their sense and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast

1 Loss of the game

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Straight hover round the Fair her airy band,
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his halt-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the Baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain
Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's Fate!
Chang'd to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injur'd hair!

But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill?
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case
So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends,
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head
Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair,
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear,
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the Virgin's thought,
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retir'd

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring Forfex wide,
T' inclose the Lock, now joins it, to divide
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine clos'd,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interpos'd,
Fate urg'd the sheers, and cut the Sylph in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again)
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies
Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last,
Or when rich China vessels, fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!

'Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,
(The Victor cry'd) the glorious Prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach-and-six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis¹ shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a Lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!'

What Time would spare, from Steel receives its date,
And monuments; like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labour of the Gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial tow'rs of Troy,
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel
The conqu'ring force of unresisted Steel?

1 A scandalous romance by Mrs Manley (1663-1724)

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

CANTO IV

BUT anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress'd,
And secret passions labou' d in her breast
Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd Hair.

For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew,
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sully'd the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows
Here in a grotto, shelter'd close from air,
And screen'd in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head

Two handmaids wait the throne - alike in place,
But diff'ring far in figure and in face
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd!
With store of pray'rs, for mornings, nights, and noons
Her hand is fill'd, her bosom with lampoons

There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show
The fair-ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.

A constant Vapour o'er the palace flies,
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise,
Dreadful, as hermits dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and Angels in machines

Unnumber'd throngs, on ev'ry side are seen,
Of bodies chang'd to various forms by Spleen
Here living Tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
One bent, the handle this, and that the spout
A pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod walks,
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pye talks,
Men prove with child, as pow'rful fancy works,
And maids turn'd bottles, call aloud for corks

Safe past the Gnome through this fantastic band,
A branch of healing Spleenwort in his hand
Then thus address'd the pow'r - 'Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen
Parent of vapours and of female wit,
Who give th' hysterick, or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays,
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray,
A nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like Citron-waters matrons cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game,
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caus'd suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discompos'd the head-dress of a Prude,
Or e'er to costive lap dog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen'

The Goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, tho' she grants his pray'r
A wond'rous Bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds,
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues
A Vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears
The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the Furies issu'd at the vent
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
'O wretched maid!' she spread her hands, and cry'd,
(While Hampton's echoes 'Wretched maid!' reply'd)
'Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with tort'ring irons wreath'd around?

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

For this with fillets strain'd your tender head?
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare?
Honour for bid' at whose unival'd shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Expos'd through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heighten'd by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow,
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow,
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to Chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!

She said, then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her Beau demand the precious hairs
(Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
And thus broke out - 'My Lord, why, what the devil!
Z - ds! damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on 't! 'tis past a jest - nay, prithee, pox!
Give her the hair' - he spoke, and rapp'd his box
'It grieves me much' (reply'd the Peer again)
'Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain
But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair,

Which never more its honours shall renew,
 Clip'd from the lovely head where late it grew)
 That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
 This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear '
 He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph sp. ead
 The long-contended honours of her head

But Umbriel, hateful Gnome! forbears not so,
 He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows flow
 Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
 Her eyes half-languishing, half-drown'd in tears,
 On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,
 Which, with a sigh, she rais'd, and thus she said
 'For ever curs'd be this detested day,
 Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl away!
 Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
 If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!
 Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
 By love of Courts to num'rous ills betray'd
 Oh had I rather un-admir'd remain'd
 In some lone isle, or distant Northern land,
 Where the gilt Chariot never marks the way,
 Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!
 There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,
 Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die
 What mov'd my mind with youthful Lords to roam?
 O had I stay'd, and said my pray'rs at home!
 'Twas this, the morning omens seem'd to tell
 Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell,
 The tott'ring China shook without a wind,
 Nay Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
 A Sylph too warn'd me of the threats of fate,
 In mystic visions, now believ'd too late!
 See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
 My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares:

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck,
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own,
Uncui'd it hangs, the fatal sheers demands,
And tempts, once more, thy sacrilegious hands
Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!

CANTO V

SHE said the pitying audience melt in tears,
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido rag'd in vain
Then grave Clarissa graceful wav'd her fan,
Silence ensu'd, and thus the nymph began

'Say, why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why deck'd with all that land and sea afford
Why Angels call'd, and Angel-like adored?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-glov'd Beaus
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains
That men may say, when we the front-box grace,
Behold the first in virtue as in face!
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charm'd the small-pox, or chas'd old-age away,
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?

THE RAPTURE OF THE LOCK

To patch, may ogle, might become a Saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey,
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid,
What then remains, but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humour still, whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll,
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.'

So spoke the Dame, but no applause ensu'd,
Belinda frown'd, Thalestris call'd her Pude
'To arms, to arms!' the fierce Virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies
All side in parties, and begin th' attack,
Fans clap, silks russle, and tough whalebones crack,
Heroes' and Heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And base and treble voices strike the skies
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound

So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage,
'Gainst Pallas, Mars, Latona, Hermes arms,
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms
Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps re-sound
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height
Clap'd his glad wings, and sat to view the fight

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Prop'd on their bodkin spears, the Sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray

While through the press enrag'd Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A Beau and Witling perish'd in the throng,
One dy'd in metaphor, and one in song
'O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,'
Cry'd Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
'Those eyes are made so killing' – was his last
Thus on Maeander's flow'ry margin lies
Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies

When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a frown,
She smil'd to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the Beau reviv'd again

Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the Men's wits against the Lady's hair,
'The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside

See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes
Nor fear'd the chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die
But this bold Lord, with manly strength endu'd,
She with one finger and a thumb subdu'd
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw,
The Gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose

'Now meet thy fate!' incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side,

FHL RAPE OF THE LOCK

(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great great grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings, which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew,
Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,
Which long she wove, and now Belinda wears)

'Boast not my tall,' (he cry'd) 'insulting foe'
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind,
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames — but burn alive'

'Restore the Lock!' she cries, and all around
'Restore the Lock!' the vaulted roofs rebound
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his pain
But see how oft ambitious aims are cross'd,
And chiefs contend 'till all the prize is lost!
The Lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So Heav'n decrees! with Heav'n who can contest?

Some thought it mounted to the Lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasur'd there
There Heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases,
And Beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases
There broken vows, and death-bed alms are found,
And lovers hearts with ends of ribband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's pray'rs,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoak a flea,
Dry'd butterflies, and tomes of casuistry

But trust the Muse – she saw it upward rise,
 Tho' mark'd by none but quick, poetic eyes
 (So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew,
 To Proculus alone confess'd in view)
 A sudden Star, it shot through liquid air,
 And drew behind a radiant trail of hair
 Not Berenice's Locks first rose so bright,
 The heav'ns bespangling with dishevel'd light
 The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
 And pleas'd pursue its progress through the skies
 This the Beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
 And hail with music its propitious ray,
 This the bless'd Lover shall for Venus take,
 And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake,¹
 This Partridge² soon shall view in cloudless skies,
 When next he looks through Galileo's eyes,
 And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
 The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome

Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd
 hair,
 Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
 Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
 Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost
 For, after all the murders of your eye,
 When, after millions slain, yourself shall die,
 When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
 And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
 This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
 And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name

1 A pond once in St James's Park

2 John Partridge was a ridiculous star-gazer, who in his Almanacks every year, never fail'd to predict the downfall of the Pope, and the King of France, then at war with the English P

THE TEMPLE OF FAME

WHILE thus I stood, intcnt to see and hear,
One came, m^t thought, and whisper'd in my ear
'What could thus high thy rash ambition raise?
Art thou, fond youth, a candidate for praise?'

'Tis true,' said I, 'not void of hopes I came,
For who so fond as youthful bards of Fame?
But few, alas! the casual blessing boast,
So hard to gain, so easy to be lost
How vain that second life in others breath,
Th' estate which wits inherit after death!
Ease, health, and life, for this they must resign,
(Unsure the tenure, but how vast the fine!)
The great man's curse, without the gains, endure,
Be envied, wretched, and be flatter'd, poor,
All luckless wits their enemies profest,
And all successful, jealous friends at best
Nor Fame I slight, nor for her favours call,
She comes unlook'd for, if she comes at all
But if the purchase costs so dear a price,
As soothing Folly, or exalting Vice
Oh! if the Muse must flatter lawless sway,
And follow still where fortune leads the way,
Or if no basis bear my rising name,
But the fall'n ruins of another's fame,
Then teach me, heav'n! to scorn the guilty bays,
Drive from my breast that wretched lust of praise,
Unblemish'd let me live, or die unknown,
Oh, grant an honest fame, or grant me none!'

ELOISA TO ABELARD

Abelard and Eloisa flourished in the twelfth century, they were two of the most distinguished persons of their age in learning and beauty, but for nothing more famous than for their unfortunate passion. After a long course of calamities, they retired each to a several Convent, and consecrated the remainder of their days to religion. It was many years after this separation, that a letter of Abelard's to a Friend, which contained the history of his misfortune, fell into the hands of Eloisa. This awakening all her tenderness, occasioned those celebrated letters (out of which the following is partly extracted) which give so lively a picture of the struggles of grace and nature, virtue and passion. P

IN these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns,
What means this tumult in a Vestal's veins?
Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?
Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?
Yet, yet I love! — From Abelard it came,
And Eloisa yet must kiss the name

Dear fatal name! rest ever unreveal'd,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence seal'd
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd Idea lies
Oh write it not, my hand — the name appears
Already written — wash it out, my tears!
In vain lost Eloisa weeps and prays,
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys

Relentless walls! whose darksome round contains
Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains
Ye rugged rocks, which holy knees have worn,
Ye grots and caverns, shagg'd with horrid thorn!
Shrines! where their vigils pale-ey'd virgins keep,
And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!
Tho' cold like you, unmov'd and silent grown,
I have not yet forgot myself to stone

ELOISA TO ABELARD

All is not Heav'n's while Abelard has part,
Still rebel nature holds out half my heart,
Nor pray'rs nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,
Nor tears for ages taught to flow in vain

Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
That well-known name awakens all my woes
Oh name for ever sad! for ever dear!
Still breath'd in sighs, still usher'd with a tear
I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
Some dire misfortune follows close behind
Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,
Led through a sad variety of woe.

Now warm in love, now with'ring in my bloom,
Lost in a convent's solitary gloom!
There stern Religion quench'd th' unwilling flame,
There dy'd the best of passions, Love and Fame.

Yet write, oh write me all, that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.
Nor foes nor fortune take this pow'r away,
And is my Abelard less kind than they?
Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare,
Love but demands what else were shed in pray'r,
No happier task these faded eyes pursue,
To read and weep is all they now can do

Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief,
Ah, more than share it, give me all thy grief
Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid,
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires,
The virgin's wish without her fears impairt,
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame,
When Love approach'd me under Friendship's name,
My fancy form'd thee of angelic kind,
Some emanation of th' all-beauteous Mind
Those smiling eyes, attemp'ring ev'ry ray,
Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day
Guiltless I gaz'd, Heaven listen'd while you sung,
And truths¹ divine came mended from that tongue
From lips like those, what precept fail'd to move?
Too soon they taught me 'twas no sin to love
Back through the paths of pleasing sense I ran,
Nor wish'd an Angel whom I lov'd a Man
Dim and remote the joys of saints I see,
Nor envy them that heav'n I lose for thee

How oft, when press'd to marriage, have I said,
Curse on all laws but those which love has made?
Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies
Let wealth, let honour, wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame,
Before true passion all those views remove,
Fame, wealth, and honour! what are you to Love?
The jealous God, when we profane his fires,
Those restless passions in revenge inspires,
And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
Who seek in love for aught but love alone
Should at my feet the world's great master fall,
Himself, his throne, his world, I'd scorn 'em all
Not Caesar's empress would I deign to prove,
No, make me mistress to the man I love,
If there be yet another name more free,
More fond than mistress, make me that 'to thee'

1 He was her Preceptor in Philosophy and Divinity P

ELOISA TO ABELARD

Oh' happy state! when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature, law
All then is full, possessing and possess'd,
No craving void left aking in the breast
Ev'n thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart
This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be)
And once the lot of Abelard and me

Alas how chang'd! what sudden horrors rise!
A naked Lover bound and bleeding lies!
Where, where was Eloise? her voice, her hand?
Her poniard, had oppos'd the dire command
Barbarian, stay! that bloody stroke restrain,
The crime was common, common be the pain
I can no more, by shame, by rage suppress'd,
Let tears, and burning blushes speak the rest

Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,
When, warm in youth, I bade the world farewell?
As with cold lips I kiss'd the sacred veil,
The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:
Heav'n scarce believed the Conquest it survey'd,
And Saints with wonder heard the vows I made
Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew,
Not on the Cross my eyes were fix'd, but you
Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
And if I lose thy love, I lose my all
Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe,
Those still at least are left thee to bestow
Still on that breast enamour'd let me lie,
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd,
Give all thou canst — and let me dream the rest

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Ah, no! instruct me other joys to prize,
With other beauties charm my partial eyes,
Full in my view set all the bright abode,
And make my soul quit Abelard for God

Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy care,
Plants of thy hand, and children of thy pray'r
From the false world in early youth they fled,
By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led
You¹ rais'd these hallow'd walls, the desert smil'd,
And Paradise was open'd in the Wild
No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
Our shrines irradiate, or emblaze the floors,
No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here brib'd the rage of ill-requited Heav'n
But such plain roofs as Piety could raise,
And only vocal with the Maker's praise
In these lone walls (their days eternal bound)
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets
crown'd,
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light,
Thy eyes diffus'd a reconciling ray,
And gleams of glory brighten'd all the day
But now no face divine contentment wears,
'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears
See how the force of others pray'r's I try,
(O pious fraud of am'rous charity!)
But why should I on others pray'r's depend?
Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!
Ah let thy handmaid, sister, daughter move,
And all those tender names in one, thy love!
The darksome pines that o'er yon rocks reclin'd,
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,

ELOISA TO ABELARD

The wand'ring streams that shine between the hills,
The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze,
No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid
But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles, and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, and a dread repose
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

Yet here for ever, ever must I stay,
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!
Death, only death, can break the lasting chain,
And here, ev'n then, shall my cold dust remain,
Here all its frailties, all its flames resign,
And wait till 'tis no sin to mix with thine

Ah wretch! believ'd the spouse of God in vain,
Confess'd within the slave of love and man
Assist me, heav'n! but whence arose that pray'r?
Sprung it from piety, or from despair?
Ev'n here, where frozen chastity retires,
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires
I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought,
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault,
I view my crime, but kindle at the view,
Repent old pleasures, and solicit new,
Now turn'd to heav'n, I weep my past offence,
Now think of thee, and curse my innocence
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget'

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,
And love th' offender, yet detest th' offence?
How the dear object from the crime remove,
Or how distinguish penitence from love?
Unequal task! a passion to resign,
For hearts so touch'd, so pierced, so lost as mine
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love, how often hate!
How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain, — do all things but forget
But let heav'n seize it, all at once 'tis fir'd,
Not touch'd, but rapt, not waken'd, but inspir'd!
Oh come! oh teach me nature to subdue,
Renounce my love, my life, myself — and you
Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.

How happy is the blameless Vestal's lot?
The world forgetting, by the world forgot
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!
Each pray'r accepted, and each wish resign'd,
Labour and rest, that equal periods keep,
'Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep,'
Desires compos'd, affections ever ev'n,
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heav'n.
Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whispering Angels prompt her golden dreams.
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,
And wings of Seraphs shed divine perfumes,
For her the Spouse prepares the bridal ring,
For her white virgins Hymenaeals sing,
To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day.

Far other dreams my erring soul employ,
Far other raptures, of unholy joy

LLOI SA TO ABEI ARD

When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
Fancy restores what vengeance snatch'd away,
Then conscience sleeps, and leaving nature free,
All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee
Oh curst, dear horrors of all-conscious night!
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!
Provoking Demons all restraint remove,
And sti within me ev'y source of love
I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,
And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms
I wake — no more I hear, no more I view,
The phantom flies me, as unkind as you
I call aloud, it hears not what I say
I stretch my empty arms, it glides away
To dream once more I close my willing eyes,
Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise,
Alas, no more! methinks we wand'ring go
Through dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,
Where round some mould'ring tow'r pale ivy creeps,
And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps
Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies,
Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise
I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,
And wake to all the griefs I left behind

For thee the fates, severely kind, ordain
A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain,
Thy life a long dead calm of fix'd repose,
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows
Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow,
Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiv'n,
And mild as op'ning gleams of promis'd heav'n
Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?
The torch of Venus burns not for the dead

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Nature stands check'd, Religion disapproves,
Ev'n thou art cold — yet Eloisa loves
Ah hopeless, lasting flames, like those that burn
To light the dead, and warm th' unfruitful urn

What scenes appear where'er I turn my view?
The dear Ideas, where I fly, pursue,
Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,
Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes
I waste the Matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God and me,
Thy voice I seem in ev'ry hymn to hear,
With ev'ry bead I drop too soft a tear
When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,
And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight
In seas of flame my plunging soul is drown'd,
While Altars blaze, and Angels tremble round.

While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,
Kind, virtuous drops just gath'ring in my eye,
While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
And dawning grace is op'ning on my soul
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!
Oppose thyself to heav'n, dispute my heart,
Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes
Blot out each bright Idea of the skies,
Take back that grace, those sorrows, and those tears;
Take back my fruitless penitence and pray'r,
Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode,
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!

No, fly me, fly me, far as Pole from Pole,
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee

I LOISA TO ABELARD

Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign,
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine
Fair eyes, and tempting looks (which yet I view!)
Long lov'd, ador'd ideas, all adieu!
O Grace serene! O virtue heav'nly fair!
Divine oblivion of low-thoughted care!
Fresh-blooming Hope, gay daughter of the sky!
And Faith, our early immortality!
Enter, each mild, each amicable guest,
Receive, and wrap me, in eternal rest!

See in her cell sad Eloisa spread,
Propt on some tomb, a neighbour of the dead
In each low wind methinks a Spirit calls,
And more than Echoes talk along the walls
Here, as I watch'd the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound
'Come, sister, come!' (it said, or seem'd to say)
'Thy place is here, sad sister, come away'
Once like thyself, I trembled, wept, and pray'd,
Love's victim then, tho' now a sainted maid
But all is calm in this eternal sleep,
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep,
Ev'n superstition loses every fear
For God, not man, absolves our frailties here'

I come, I come! prepare your roseate bow'rs,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow
Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of day
See my lips tremble, and my eye-balls roll,
Suck my last breath and catch my flying soul!
Ah no — in sacred vestments may'st thou stand,
The hallow'd taper trembling in thy hand,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Present the Cross before my lifted eye,
Teach me at once, and learn of me to die
Ah then, thy once-lov'd Eloisa see!
It will be then no crime to gaze on me
See from my cheek the transient roses fly!
See the last sparkle languish in my eye!
'Till every motion, pulse, and breath be o'er,
And ev'n my Abelard be lov'd no more
O Death all-eloquent! you only prove
What dust we doat on, when 'tis man we love

Then too, when fate shall thy fair frame destroy,
(That cause of all my guilt, and all my joy)
In trance extatic may thy pangs be drown'd,
Bright clouds descend, and Angels watch thee
round,

From op'ning skies may streaming glories shine,
And Saints embrace thee with a love like mine

May one kind grave¹ unite each hapless name,
And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
When this rebellious heart shall beat no more,
If ever chance two wand'ring lovers brings
To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
And drink the falling tears each other sheds,
Then sadly say, with mutual pity mov'd,
'Oh, may we never love as these have lov'd!'
From the full choir when loud Hosannas rise,
And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,
Amid that scene if some relenting eye
Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,

1. Abelard and Eloisa were interr'd in the same grave, or in monuments adjoining, in the Monastery of the Paraclete. He died in the year 1142, she in 1163. P.

ELOISA TO ABELARD

Devotion's self shall steal a thought from heav'n,
One human tear shall drop, and be forgiv'n
And sure if fate some future bard shall join
In sad similitude of griefs to mine,
Condemn'd whole years in absence to deplore,
And image charms he must behold no more,
Such if there be, who loves so long, so well,
Let him our sad, our tender story tell,
The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost,
He best can paint 'em who shall feel 'em most

ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UNFORTUNATE LADY

WHAT beck'ning ghost, along the moon-light shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
'Tis she! — but why that bleeding bosom gor'd,
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?
Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly! tell,
Is it, in heav'n, a crime to love too well?
To bear too tender, or too firm a heart,
To act a Lover's or a Roman's part?
Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
For those who greatly think, or bravely die?

Why bade ye else, ye Pow'r's! her soul aspire
Above the vulgar flight of low desire?
Ambition first sprung from your blest abodes,
The glorious fault of Angels and of Gods
Thence to their images on earth it flows,
And in the breasts of Kings and Heroes glows
Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,
Dull, sullen pris'ners in the body's cage
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres,
Like Eastern Kings a lazy state they keep,
And, close confin'd to their own palace, sleep

From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)
Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky
As into air the purer spirits flow,
And sep'reate from their kindred dregs below,
So flew the soul to its congenial place,
Nor left one virtue to redeem her Race

But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,
Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's blood!

ELEGY

See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death,
Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more
Thus, if Eternal justice rules the ball,
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall
On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,
And frequent hères shall besiege your gates,
There passengers shall stand, and pointing say,
(While the long fun'rals blacken all the way)
'Lo! these were they, whose souls the Furies steel'd,
And curs'd with hearts unknowing how to yield'
Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow
For others good, or melt at others woe

What can atone (Oh ever-injur'd shade!)
Thy fate unpity'd, and thy rites unpaid?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or grac'd thy mournful bier
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were clos'd,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,
By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd!
What tho' no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show?
What tho' no weeping Loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?
What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow,
While Angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.
How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot,
A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!

Poets themselves must fall like those they sung,
Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
Ev'n he, whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays,
Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,
Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
The Muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!

EPISTLE TO MRS BLOUNT¹

WITH THE WORKS OF VOITURE²

In these gay thoughts the Loves and Graces shine,
And all the Writer lives in ev'ry line,
His easy Art may happy Nature seem,
Trifles themselves are elegant in him
Sure to charm all was his peculiar fate,
Who without flatt'ry pleased the fair and great,
Still with esteem no less convers'd than read,
With wit well-natur'd, and with books well-bred
His heart, his mistress, and his friend did share,
His time, the Muse, the witty, and the fair.
Thus wisely careless, innocently gay,
Chearful he play'd the trifle, Life, away,
Till fate scarce felt his gentle breath suppress,
As smiling Infants sport themselves to rest
Ev'n rival Wits did Voiture's death deplore,
And the gay mourn'd who never mourn'd before,
The truest hearts for Voiture heav'd with sighs,
Voiture was wept by all the brightest Eyes
The Smiles and Loves had dy'd in Voiture's death,
But that for ever in his lines they breathe

Let the strict life of graver mortals be
A long, exact, and serious Comedy,
In ev'ry scene some Moral let it teach,
And, if it can, at once both please and preach.
Let mine an innocent gay Farce appear,
And more diverting still than regular,

1 This poem was addressed to Martha Blount (1690–1762), a life-long and intimate friend of Pope's. He also addressed verses to her sister, Teresa.

2. Vincent Voiture (1598–1648), a French wit and letter writer.

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Have Humour, Wit, a native Ease and Grace,
Tho' not too strictly bound to Time and Place
Critics in Wit, or Life, are hard to please,
Few write to those, and none can live to these

Too much your Sex is by their forms confin'd,
Severe to all, but most to Womankind,
Custom, grown blind with Age, must be your guide,
Your pleasure is a vice, but not your pride,
By Nature yielding, stubborn but for fame,
Made Slaves by honour, and made Fools by shame
Marriage may all those petty Tyrants chase,
But sets up one, a greater in their place
Well might you wish for change by those accurst,
But the last Tyrant ever proves the worst
Still in constraint your suff'ring Sex remains,
Or bound in formal, or in real chains
Whole years neglected, for some months ador'd,
The fawning Servant turns a haughty Lord
Ah quit not the free innocence of life,
For the dull glory of a virtuous Wife,
Nor let false Shews, or empty Titles please
Aim not at Joy, but rest content with Ease

The Gods, to curse Pamela with her pray'rs,
Gave the gilt Coach and dappled Flanders Mares,
The shining robes, rich jewels, beds of state,
And, to complete her bliss, a Fool for Mate
She glares in Balls, front Boxes, and the Ring,
A vain, unquiet, glitt'ring, wretched Thing!
Pride, Pomp, and State but reach her outward part
She sighs, and is no Duchess at her heart

But, Madam, if the Fates withstand, and you
Are destin'd Hymen's willing Victim too
Trust not too much your now resistless charms,
Those, Age or Sickness, soon or late, disarms

EPISTLE TO MRS BLOUNT

Good-humour only teaches charms to last
Still makes new conquests, and maintains the past,
Love, rais'd on Beauty, will like that decay,
Our hearts may bear its slender chain a day,
As flow'ry bands in wantonness are woin,
A morning's pleasure, and at evening torn,
This binds in ties more easy, yet more strong,
The willing heart, and only holds it long

Thus Voiture's early care still shone the same,
And Monthausier¹ was only chang'd in name
By this, ev'n now they live, ev'n now they charm,
Their Wit still sparkling, and their flames still warm

Now crown'd with Myrtle, on th' Elysian coast,
Amid those Lovers, joys his gentle Ghost
Pleas'd, while with smiles his happy lines you view,
And finds a fairer Rambouillet¹ in you
The brightest eyes of France inspir'd his Muse,
The brightest eyes of Britain now peruse,
And dead, as living, 'tis our Author's pride
Still to charm those who charm the world beside

1 Madame de Monthausier was the name under which Voiture celebrated Mlle de Rambouillet

EPISTLE TO MRS TERESA BLOUNT¹

ON HER LEAVING THE TOWN AFTER THE CORONATION²

As some fond Virgin, whom her mother's care
Drags from the Town to wholesome Country air,
Just when she learns to roll a melting eye,
And hear a spark, yet think no danger nigh,
From the dear man unwilling she must sever,
Yet takes one kiss before she parts for ever
Thus from the world fair Zephalinda flew,
Saw others happy, and with sighs withdrew,
Not that their pleasures caus'd her discontent,
She sigh'd not that they stay'd, but that she went

She went, to plain-work, and to purling brooks,
Old-fashion'd halls, dull Aunts, and croaking rooks:
She went from Op'ra, Park, Assembly, Play,
To morning-walks, and pray'rs three hours a-day;
To part her time 'twixt reading and bohea,
To muse, and spill her solitary tea,
Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon,
Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon
Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,
Hum half a tune, tell stories to the squire,
Up to her godly garret after sev'n,
There starve and pray, for that's the way to heav'n.

Some Squire, perhaps, you take delight to rack;
Whose game is Whisk, whose treat a toast in sack;
Who visits with a Gun, presents you birds,
Then gives a smacking buss, and cries, — No words!
Or with his hound comes hallooing from the stable,
Makes love with nods, and knees beneath a table;

1 See p 81, n 1

2 Of King George I 1715 P

EPISTLE TO MRS TERESA BLOUNT

Whose laughs are hearty, tho' his jests are coarse,
And loves you best of all things – but his horse
 In some fair ev'ning, on your elbow laid,
You dream of Triumphs in the rural shade,
In pensive thought recall the fancy'd scene,
See Coronations rise on ev'ry green,
Before you pass th' imaginary sights
Of Lords, and Earls, and Dukes, and garter'd Knights,
While the spread fan o'er shades your closing eyes,
Then give one flirt, and all the vision flies
Thus vanish sceptres, coronets, and balls,
And leave you in lone woods, or empty walls!

So when your Slave, at some dear idle time,
(Not plagu'd with head-achs, or the want of rhyme)
Stands in the streets, abstracted from the crew,
And while he seems to study, thinks of you,
Just when his fancy paints your sprightly eyes,
Or sees the blush of soft Parthenia rise,
Gay¹ pats my shoulder, and you vanish quite,
Streets, Chairs, and Coxcombs rush upon my sight,
Vex'd to be still in town, I knit my brow,
Look sour, and hum a Tune, as you do now

1. John Gay (1685–1732), poet and a friend of Pope's.

EPISTLE TO MR JERVAS¹

WITH MR DRYDEN'S TRANSLATION OF FRESNOY'S
‘ART OF PAINTING’²

THIS Verse be thine, my friend, nor thou refuse
This, from no venal or ungrateful Muse
Whether thy hand strike out some free design,
Where Life awakes, and dawns at ev'ry line,
Or blend in beauteous tints the colour'd mass,
And from the canvas call the mimic face
Read these instructive leaves, in which conspire
Fresnoy's close Art, and Dryden's native Fire
And reading wish, like theirs, our fate and fame,
So mix'd our studies, and so join'd our name,
Like them to shine through long succeeding age,
So just thy skill, so regular my rage

Smit with the love of Sister-Arts we came,
And met congenial, mingling flame with flame,
Like friendly colours found them both unite,
And each from each contract new strength and light
How oft' in pleasing tasks we wear the day,
While summer-suns roll unperceiv'd away?
How oft our slowly-growing works impart,
While Images reflect from art to art?
How oft review, each finding like a friend
Something to blame, and something to commend?

What flatt'ring scenes our wand'ring fancy wrought,
Rome's pompous glories rising to our thought!
Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
Fir'd with Ideas of fair Italy

¹ Charles Jervas (1675–1739), a fashionable portrait painter who taught painting to Pope

² John Dryden translated Charles Fresnoy's (1613–65) Latin poem, *The Art of Painting*

EPISTLE TO MR JFRVAS

With thee, on Raphael's Monument I mourn,
Or wait inspiring Dreams at Maro's Urn
With thee repose, where Tully once was laid,
Or seek some Ruin's formidable shade
While Fancy brings the vanish'd piles to view,
And builds imaginary Rome a-new,
Here thy well-study'd marbles fix our eye,
A fading Fresco here demands a sigh
Each heav'ly piece unwearied we compare,
Match Raphael's grace with thy lov'd Guido's art,
Carracci's strength, Correggio's softer line,
Paulo's free stroke, and Titian's warmth divine

How finish'd with illustrious toil appears
This small, well-polish'd Gem, the work of years¹¹
Yet still how faint by precept is express'd
The living image in the painter's breast?
Thence endless streams of fair Ideas flow,
Strike in the sketch, or in the picture glow,
Thence Beauty, waking all her forms, supplies
An Angel's sweetness, or Bridgewater's eyes²

Muse! at that Name thy sacred sorrows shed,
Those tears eternal, that embalm the dead
Call round her Tomb each object of desire,
Each purer frame inform'd with purer fire
Bid her be all that chears or softens life,
The tender sister, daughter, friend, and wife
Bid her be all that makes mankind adore,
Then view this Marble, and be vain no more!

Yet still her charms in breathing paint engage,
Her modest cheek shall warm a future age

1 Fresnoy employed above twenty years in finishing this poem *P*
2 Elizabeth, Countess of Bridgewater, the third daughter of the Duke
of Marlborough, who died in 1714 of the small-pox, aged 27

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Beauty, frail flow'r that ev'ry season fears,
Blooms in thy colours for a thousand years
Thus Churchill's race shall other hearts surprise,
And other Beauties envy Worsley's eyes ¹
Each pleasing Blount² shall endless smiles bestow,
And soft Belinda's³ blush for ever glow

Oh lasting as those Colours may they shine,
Free as thy stroke, yet faultless as thy line,
New graces yearly like thy works display,
Soft without weakness, without glaring gay,
Led by some rule, that guides, but not constraints,
And finish'd more through happiness than pains
The kindred Arts shall in their praise conspire,
One dip the pencil, and one string the lyre
Yet should the Graces all thy figures place,
And breathe an air divine on ev'ry face,
Yet should the Muses bid my numbers roll
Strong as their charms, and gentle as their soul,
With Zeuxis' Helen thy Bridgewater vie,
And these be sung till Granville's Myra die ⁴
Alas! how little from the grave we claim!
Thou but preserv'st a Face, and I a Name

¹ Frances, Lady Worsley, wife of Sir Robert Worsley, Bart

² See p 81, n 1. ³ Miss Fermor, see p 39, n 1

⁴ George Granville, Lord Lansdowne (1665–1735) – a friend of Pope's – addressed love verses to *Myra*

EPISTLE TO ROBERT EARL OF OXFORD
AND EARL MORTIMER¹

SUCH were the notes thy once-lov'd Poet sung,
Till Death untimely stop'd his tuneful tongue
Oh just beheld, and lost! admir'd and mourn'd!
With softest manners, gentlest arts adorn'd!
Blest in each science, blest in ev'ry strain!
Dear to the Muse! to HARLEY dear — in vain!

For him, thou oft hast bid the World attend,
Fond to forget the Statesman in the Friend,
For SWIFT² and him, despis'd the farce of state,
The sober follies of the wise and great,
Dext'rous, the craving, fawning crowd to quit,
And pleas'd to 'scape from Flattery to Wit

Absent or dead, still let a friend be dear,
(A sigh the absent claims, the dead a tear)
Recall those nights that clos'd thy toilsome days,
Still hear thy Parnell in his living lays,
Who, careless now of Int'rest, Fame, or Fate,
Perhaps forgets that OXFORD e'er was great,
Or deeming meanest what we greatest call,
Beholds thee glorious only in thy Fall

And sure, if aught below the seats divine
Can touch Immortals, 'tis a Soul like thine
A Soul supreme, in each hard instance try'd,
Above all Pain, all Passion, and all Pride,

1 This Epistle was sent to the Earl of Oxford [1661–1724] with Dr Parnell's [1679–1718] Poems, published by our author, after the said Earl's imprisonment in the Tower [he was confined there from 1714–17 after falling from political power], and retreat into the country in the year 1721 *P*

2 Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), the great satirist and friend of Pope's

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

The rage of Pow'r, the blast of public breath,
The lust of Lucie, and the dread of Death

In vain to Deserts thy retreat is made,
The Muse attends thee to thy silent shade
'Tis hers the brave man's latest steps to trace,
Rejudge his acts, and dignify disgrace
When Int'rest calls off all her sneaking train,
And all th' oblig'd desert, and all the vain,
She waits, or to the scaffold, or the cell,
When the last ling'ring friend has bid farewell
Ev'n now, she shades thy Ev'ning-walk with bays,
(No hireling she, no prostitute to praise)
Ev'n now, observant of the parting ray,
Eyes the calm Sun-set of thy various Day,
Through Fortune's cloud one truly great can see,
Nor fears to tell, that MORTIMER is he

EPITAPHS

ON THE HON SIMON HARcourt, ONLY SON OF THE
LORD CHANCELLOR HARcourt, AT THE CHURCH OF
STANTON HARcourt IN OXFORDSHIRE, 1720

To this sad Shrine, whoe'er thou art! draw near,
Here lies the Friend most lov'd, the Son most dear
Who ne'er knew Joy, but Friendship might divide,
Or gave his Father Grief but when he dy'd
How vain is Reason, Eloquence how weak!
If *Pope* must tell what HARcourt cannot speak
Oh, let thy once-lov'd Friend inscribe thy Stone,
And, with a Father's sorrows, mix his own!

ON MRS CORBET, WHO DIED OF A CANCER
IN HER BREAST

HERE rests a Woman, good without pretence,
Blest with plain Reason, and with sober Sense
No Conquests she, but o'er herself, desir'd,
No Arts essay'd, but not to be admir'd
Passion and Pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinc'd that Virtue only is our own
So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,
So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refin'd,
Heav'n, as its purest gold, by Tortures try'd!
The Saint sustain'd it, but the Woman died

ON SIR WILLIAM TRUMBAL¹

A PLEASING Form, a firm, yet cautious Mind,
Sincere, tho' prudent, constant, yet resign'd

1 See p 1, n 1

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Honour unchang'd, a Principle profest,
Fix'd to one side, but mod'rate to the rest
An honest Courtier, yet a Patriot too,
Just to his Prince, and to his Country true
Fill'd with the Sense of Age, the Fire of Youth,
A Scorn of Wrangling, yet a Zeal for Truth,
A gen'rous Faith, from Superstition free,
A Love to Peace, and Hate of Tyranny,
Such this Man was, who now, from earth remov'd,
At length enjoys that Liberty he lov'd

ON MR GAY, IN WESTMINSTER-ABBEY, 1732¹

OF Manner's gentle, of Affections mild,
In Wit, a Man, Simplicity, a Child
With native Humour temp'ring virtuous Rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age
Above Temptation, in a low Estate,
And uncorrupted, ev'n among the Great.
A safe Companion, and an easy Friend,
Unblam'd through Life, lamented in thy End
These are Thy Honours! not that here thy Bust
Is mix'd with Heroes, or with Kings thy dust,
But that the Worthy and the Good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms – *Here lies Gay.*

INTENDED FOR SIR ISAAC NEWTON,
IN WESTMINSTER-ABBEY

NATURE and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night.
GOD said, *Let Newton be!* and all was Light.

1 See p 85, n 1.

ODE ON SOLITUDE¹

HAPPY the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night, study and ease,
Together mixt, sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie

¹ This was a very early production of our Author, written about twelve years old *P*

ON SILENCE¹

I

SILENCE! coeval with Eternity,
Thou wert, ere Nature's self began to be,
'Twas one vast Nothing, all, and all slept fast in thee

II

Thine was the sway, ere heav'n was form'd, or
earth,
Ere fruitful Thought conceiv'd Creation's birth,
Or midwife Word gave aid, and spoke the infant forth

III

Then various elements, against thee join'd,
In one more various animal combin'd,
And fram'd the clam'rous race of busy humankind

IV

The tongue mov'd gently first, and speech was low,
Till wrangling Science taught it noise and show,
And wicked Wit arose, thy most abusive foe

V

But rebel Wit deserts thee oft' in vain,
Lost in the maze of words he turns again,
And seeks a surer state, and courts thy gentle reign

¹ This is an imitation of the Earl of Rochester's (1648–80) verses *On Nothing*

ON SILENCE

VI

Afflicted Sense thou kindly dost set free,
Oppress'd with argumental tyranny,
And routed Reason finds a safe retreat in thee

VII

With thee in private modest Dulness lies,
And in thy bosom lurks in Thought's disguise,
Thou varnisher of Fools, and cheat of all the Wise!

VIII

Yet thy indulgence is by both confess,
Folly by thee lies sleeping in the breast,
And 'tis in thee at last that Wisdom seeks for rest

IX

Silence! the knave's repute, the whore's good name,
The only honour of the wishing dame,
Thy very want of tongue makes thee a kind of Fame

X

But could'st thou seize some tongues that now are
free,
How Church and State should be oblig'd to thee!
At Senate, and at Bar, how welcome would'st thou be!

XI

Yet speech ev'n there, submissively withdraws
From rights of subjects, and the poor man's cause
Then pompous Silence reigns, and stills the noisy
Laws

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

XII

Past services of friends, good deeds of foes,
What Fav'rites gain, and what the Nation owes,
Fly the forgetful world, and in thy arms repose

XIII

The country wit, religion of the town,
The courtier's learning, policy o' th' gown,
Are best by thee express'd, and shine in thee alone.

XIV

The parson's cant, the lawyer's sophistry,
Lord's quibble, critic's jest, all end in thee,
All rest in peace at last, and sleep eternally

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL

I

VITAL spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life

II

Hark! they whisper, Angels say,
'Sister Spirit, come away!'
What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my Soul, can this be Death?

III

The world recedes; it disappears!
Heav'n opens on my eyes! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy Victory?
O Death! where is thy Sting?

TO THE AUTHOR OF A POEM
ENTITLED *SUCCESSIO*¹

BEGONE, ye critics, and restrain your spite,
Codrus writes on, and will for ever write
The heaviest Muse the swiftest course has gone,
As clocks run fastest when most lead is on,
What though no bees around your cradle flew,
Nor on your lips distill'd the golden dew,
Yet have we oft discover'd in their stead
A swarm of drones that buzz'd about your head
When you, like *Orpheus*, strike the warbling lyre,
Attentive blocks stand round you and admire
Wit pass'd thro' thee no longer is the same,
As meat digested takes a diff'rent name,
But sense must sure thy safest plunder be,
Since no reprisals can be made on thee
Thus thou may'st rise, and in thy daring flight
(Though ne'er so weighty) reach a wondrous height.
So, forc'd from engines, lead itself can fly,
And ponderous slugs move nimbly thro' the sky
Sure *Bavrius* copy'd *Maevrius* to the full,
And *Chaerilus* taught *Codrus* to be dull,
Therefore, dear friend, at my advice give o'er
This needless labour, and contend no more
To prove a dull *Succession* to be true,
Since 'tis enough we find it so in you

1 The author was the dull poet, Elkanah Settle (1648–1724)

PROLOGUE TO MR ADDISON'S TRAGEDY OF CATO¹

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,
To make mankind, in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold
For this the Tragic Muse first trod the stage,
Commanding tears to stream through ev'ry age,
Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wonder'd how they wept
Our author shuns by vulgar springs to move
The hero's glory, or the virgin's love,
In pitying Love, we but our weakness show,
And wild Ambition well deserves its woe
Here tears shall flow from a more gen'rous cause,
Such tears as Patriots shed for dying Laws
He bids your breasts with ancient ardour rise,
And calls forth Roman drops from British eyes
Virtue confess'd in human shape he draws,
What Plato thought, and godlike Cato was
No common object to your sight displays,
But what with pleasure Heav'n itself surveys,
A brave man struggling in the storms of fate,
And greatly falling with a falling state
While Cato gives his little Senate laws,
What bosom beats not in his Country's cause?
Who sees him act, but envies ev'ry deed?
Who hears him groan, and does not wish to bleed?
Ev'n when proud Caesar 'midst triumphal cars,
The spoils of nations, and the pomp of wars,

¹ Joseph Addison's (1672–1719) famous tragedy of *Cato* was first acted in 1713

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Ignobly vain, and impotently great,
Show'd Rome her Cato's figure drawn in state,
As her dead Father's rev'rend image pass'd,
The pomp was darken'd and the day o'er cast,
The Triumph ceas'd, tears gush'd from ev'ry eye,
The World's great Victor pass'd unheeded by,
Her last good man dejected Rome ador'd,
And honour'd Caesar's less than Cato's sword

Britons, attend be worth like this approv'd,
And show, you have the virtue to be mov'd
With honest scorn the first fam'd Cato view'd
Rome learning arts from Greece, whom she subdued,
Your scene precariously subsists too long
On French translation, and Italian song
Dare to have sense yourselves, assert the stage,
Be justly warm'd with your own native rage,
Such Plays alone should win a British ear,
As Cato's self had not disdain'd to hear

EPIGRAM

ENGRAVED ON THE COLLAR OF A DOG WHICH I GAVE
TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

I AM His Highness' dog at Kew;
Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?

TO MRS M B¹ ON HER BIRTHDAY

Oh be thou blest with all that Heav'n can send,
Long Health, long Youth, long Pleasure, and a Friend
Not with those Toys the female world admire,
Riches that vex, and Vanities that tire
With added years if Life bring nothing new,
But like a Sieve let ev'ry blessing through,
Some joy still lost, as each vain year runs o'er,
And all we gain, some sad Reflection more,
Is that a Birth-day? 'tis alas! too clear
'Tis but the Fun'r'al of the former year

Let Joy or Ease, let Affluence or Content,
And the gay Conscience of a life well spent,
Calm ev'ry thought, inspirit ev'ry grace,
Glow in thy heart, and smile upon thy face
Let day improve on day, and year on year,
Without a Pain, a Trouble, or a Fear,
Till Death unfelt that tender frame destroy,
In some soft Dream, or Ecstasy of Joy,
Peaceful sleep out the Sabbath of the Tomb,
And wake to Raptures in a Life to come

¹ See p 81, n 1

ON A CERTAIN LADY AT COURT

I know the thing that's most uncommon,
(Envy be silent, and attend!)

I know a reasonable Woman,
Handsome and witty, yet a Friend

Not warp'd by Passion, aw'd by Rumour,
Not grave through Pride, or gay through Folly,
An equal Mixture of good Humour,
And sensible soft McLancholy

'Has she no faults, then (Envy says) Sir?'

Yes, she has one, I must aver
When all the World conspires to praise her,
The Woman's deaf, and does not hear

FROM
THE ILIAD

Hector and Andromache

Hector, this heard, return'd without Delay,
Swift thro' the Town he trod his former way,
Thro' Streets of Palaces and Walks of State,
And met the Mourner at the *Scœan* Gate
With haste to meet him sprung the joyful Fair,
His blameless Wife, *Aetion*'s wealthy Heir
(*Cilician Thebæ* great *Aetion* sway'd,
And *Hippoplacus'* wide-extended Shade)
The Nurse stood near, in whose Embraces prest
His only Hope hung smiling at her Breast,
Whom each soft Charm and early Grace adorn,
Fair as the new-born Star that gilds the Morn
To this lov'd Infant *Hector* gave the Name
Scamandrius, from *Scamander*'s honour'd Stream,
Astyanax the *Trojans* call'd the Boy,
From his great Father, the Defence of *Troy*.
Silent the Warrior smil'd, and pleas'd resign'd
To tender Passions all his mighty Mind
His beauteous Princess cast a mournful Look,
Hung on his Hand, and then dejected spoke;
Her Bosom labour'd with a boding Sigh,
And the big Tear stood trembling in her Eye
 ‘Too daring Prince! ah whither dost thou run?
 Ah too forgetful of thy Wife and Son!
And think'st thou not how wretched we shall be,
A Widow I, an helpless Orphan He!
For sure such Courage Length of Life denies,
And thou must fall, thy Virtue's Sacrifice.

THE ILIAD

Greece in her single Heroes strove in vain,
Now Hosts oppose thee, and thou must be slain'
Oh grant me Gods' e're *Hector* meets his Doom,
All I can ask of Heav'n, an early Tomb'

'So shall my Days in one sad Tenor run,
And end with Sorrows as they first begun
No Parent now remains, my Griefs to share,
No father's Aid, no Mother's tender Care
The fierce *Achilles* wrapt our Walls in Fire,
Lay'd *Thebe* waste, and slew my warlike Sire!
His fate Compassion in the Victor bled,
Stern as he was, he yet rever'd the Dead,
His radiant Arms preserv'd from hostile Spoil,
And lay'd him decent on the Fun'r'al Pyle,
Then raised a Mountain where his Bones were burn'd,
The Mountain Nymphs the rural Tomb adorn'd,
Jove's Sylvan Daughters bade their Elms bestow
A barren Shade, and in his Honour grow

'By the same Arm my sev'n brave Brothers fell,
In one sad Day beheld the Gates of Hell,
While the fat Herds and Snowie Flocks they fed,
Amid their Fields the hapless Heroes bled!
My Mother liv'd to bear the Victor's Bands,
The Queen of *Hippoplacia's* Sylvan Lands
Redeem'd too late, she scarce beheld again
Her pleasing Empire and her native Plain,
When ah! oppress'd by Life-consuming woe,
She fell a victim to *Diana's* Bow

'Yet while my *Hector* still survives, I see
My Father, Mother, Brethren, all, in thee
Alas! my Parents, Brothers, Kindred, all,
Once more will perish if my *Hector* fall
Thy Wife, thy Infant, in thy Danger share
Oh prove a Husband's and a Father's Care!

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

That Quarter most the skillful Greeks annoy,
Where yon' wild Fig-Trees join the Wall of *Troy*
Thou, from this Tow'r defend th' important Post,
There *Agamemnon* points his dreadful Host,
That Pass *Tyrides*, *Ajax* strive to gain
And there the vengeful *Spartan* fires his Train
Thrice our bold Foes the fierce Attack have giv'n,
Or led by Hopes, or dictated from Heav'n
Let others in the Field their Arms employ,
But stay my *Hector* here, and guard his *Troy*'

The Chief reply'd 'That Post shall be my Care,
Nor that alone, but all the Works of War
How would the Sons of *Troy*, in Arms renown'd,
And *Troy*'s proud Dames whose Garments sweep the
Ground,

Attaint the Lustre of my former Name,
Should *Hector* basely quit the Field of Fame?
My early Youth was bred to martial Pains,
My Soul impells me to th' embattel'd Plains,
Let me be foremost to defend the Throne,
And guard my Father's Glories, and my own

'Yet come it will, the Day decreed by Fates,
(How my Heart trembles while my Tongue
relates!)

The Day when thou, Imperial *Troy*! must bend,
And see thy Warriors fall, thy Glories end
And yet no dire Presage so wounds my Mind,
My Mother's Death, the Ruin of my Kind,
Not *Priam*'s hoary Hairs defil'd with Gore,
Not all my Brothers gasping on the Shore,
As thine, *Andromache*! thy Griefs I dread,
I see thee trembling, weeping, Captive led!
In Argive Looms our Battels to design,
And Woes, of which so large a Part was thine!

THE ILIAD

To bear the Victor's hard Commands, or bring
The Weight of Waters from *Hyperia's* Spring
There, while you groan beneath the Load of Lite,
They cry, Behold the mighty *Hector's* Wite!
Some haughty Greek who lives thy Tears to see,
Embitters all thy Woes, by naming me
The Thoughts of Glory past, and present Shame,
A thousand Grievs shall waken at the Name!
May I lie cold before that dreadful Day,
Press'd with a Load of Monumental Clay!
Thy *Hector* wrapt in everlasting Sleep,
Shall neither hear thee sigh, nor see thee weep!

Thus having spoke, th' illustrious Chief of *Troy*
Stretch'd his fond Arms to clasp the lovely Boy
The Babe clung crying to his Nurse's Breast,
Scar'd at the dazzling Helm, and nodding Crest
With secret Pleasure each fond Parent smil'd,
And *Hector* hasted to relieve his Child,
The glitt'ing Terrors from his Brows unbound,
And plac'd the beaming Helmet on the Ground
Then kist the Child, and lifting high in Air,
Thus to the Gods prefer'd a Father's Pray'r

'O Thou! whose Glory fills th' Aetherial Throne
And all ye deathless Pow'rs! protect my Son!
Grant him, like me, to purchase just Renown,
To guard the *Trojans*, to defend the Crown,
Against his Country's Foes the War to wage,
And rise the *Hector* of the future Age!
So when triumphant from successful Toils,
Of Heroes slain he bears the reeking Spoils,
Whole Hosts may hail him with deserv'd Acclaim,
And say, "This Chief transcends his Father's Fame"
While pleas'd amidst the gen'ral Shouts of *Troy*,
His Mother's conscious Heart o'erflows with Joy.'

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

He spoke, and fondly gazing on her Charms
Restor'd the pleasing Burden to her Arms,
Soft on her fragrant Breast the Babe she laid,
Hush'd to Repose, and with a Smile survey'd
The troubled Pleasure soon chastis'd by Fear,
She mingled with the Smile a tender Tear
The soften'd Chief with kind Compassion view'd,
And dry'd the falling Drops, and thus pursu'd
'Andromache' my Soul's far better Part,
Why with untimely Sorrows heaves thy Heart?
No hostile Hand can antedate my Doom,
Till Fate condemns me to the silent Tomb
Fix'd is the Term to all the Race of Earth,
And such the hard Condition of our Birth
No Force can then resist, no Flight can save,
All sink alike, the Fearful and the Brave
No more – but hasten to thy Tasks at home,
There guide the Spindle, and direct the Loom.
Me Glory summons to the martial Scene,
The Field of Combat is the Sphere for Men
Where Heroes war, the foremost Place I claim,
The first in Danger as the first in Fame.'

Thus having said, the glorious Chief resumes
His Tow'ry Helmet, black with shading Plumes.
His Princess parts with a prophetick Sigh,
Unwilling parts, and oft' reverts her eye
That stream'd at ev'ry Look then, moving slow,
Sought her own Palace, and indulg'd her Woe
There, while her Tears deplo'red the Godlike Man,
Thro' all her Train the soft Infection ran,
The pious Maids their mingled Sorrows shed,
And mourn the living *Hector*, as the dead

Fires at Night

THE Troops exulting sate in order round,
 And beaming Fires illumin'd all the Ground
 As when the Moon, resplendent Lamp of Night!
 O'er Heav'n's clear Azure sheds her sacred Light,
 When not a Breath disturbs the deep Serene,
 And not a Cloud o'ercasts the solemn Scene,
 Around her Throne the vivid Planets roll,
 And Stars unnumber'd gild the glowing Pole,
 O'er the dark Trees a yellower Veilure shed,
 And tip with Silver ev'ry Mountain's Head,
 Then shine the Vales, the Rocks in Prospect rise,
 A Flood of Glory bursts from all the Skies
 The conscious Swains, rejoicing in the Sight,
 Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful Light
 So many Flames before proud *Ihon* blaze,
 And lighten glimm'ring *Xanthus* with their Rays.
 The long Reflections of the distant Fires
 Gleam on the Walls, and tremble on the Spires
 A thousand Piles the dusky Horrors gild,
 And shoot a shady Lustre o'er the Field
 Full fifty Guards each flaming Pile attend,
 Whose umber'd Arms, by fits, thick Flashes send
 Loud neigh the Coursers o'er their Heaps of
 Corn,
 And ardent Warriors wait the rising Morn

Vulcan Forges a Shield for Achilles

THUS having said, the Father of the Fires
 To the black Labours of his Forge retires

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Soon as he bade them blow, the Bellows turn'd
Their iron Mouths, and where the Furnace burn'd,
Resounding breath'd At once the Blast expires
And twenty Forges catch at once the Fires,
Just as the God directs, now loud, now low,
They raise a Tempest, or they gently blow
In hissing Flames huge silver Bars are roll'd,
And stubborn Brass, and Tin, and solid Gold
Before, deep fix'd, th' eternal Anvils stand,
The pond'rous Hammer loads his better Hand,
His left with Tongs turns the vex'd Metal round,
And thick, strong Strokes, the doubling Vaults
rebound

Then first he form'd th' immense and solid *Shield*,
Rich, various Artifice emblaz'd the Field,
Its utmost verge a threefold Circle bound,
A silver Chain suspends the massy Round,
Five ample Plates the broad Expanse compose,
And god-like Labours on the Surface rose
There shone the Image of the Master Mind
There Earth, there Heav'n, there Ocean he design'd,
Th' unwear'y'd Sun, the Moon compleatly round,
The starry Lights that Heav'n's high Convex
crown'd,

The *Pleiads*, *Hyads*, with the Northern Team,
And great *Orion's* more resfulgent Beam,
To which, around the Axle of the Sky,
The *Bear* revolving, points his golden Eye,
Still shines exalted on th' aetherial Plain,
Nor bends his blazing Forehead to the Main

Two Cities radiant on the Shield appear,
The Image one of Peace, and one of War
Here sacred Pomp, and genial Feast delight,
And solemn Dance, and *Hymenaeal* Rite,

THE ILLAD

Along the Street the new-made Brides are led,
With Torches flaming, to the nuptial Bed,
The youthful Dancers in a Circle bound
To the soft Flute, and Cittern's silver Sound
Thro' the fair Streets, the Matrons in a Row,
Stand in their Porches, and enjoy the Show

There, in the *Forum* swarm a num'rous Train,
The subject of Debate, a Townsman slain
One pleads the Fine discharg'd, which one deny'd,
And bade the Publick and the Laws decide
The Witness is produc'd on either Hand,
For this, or that, the partial People stand
Th' appointed Heralds still the noisy Bands,
And form a Ring, with Scepters in their Hands,
On Seats of Stone, within the sacred Place,
The rev'rend Elders nodded o'er the Case,
Alternate, each th' attesting Scepter took,
And rising solemn, each his Sentence spoke
Two golden Talents lay amidst, in sight,
The Prize of him who best adjudg'd the Right

Another Part (a Prospect diff'rning far)
Glow'd with resplendent Arms, and horrid War
Two mighty Hosts a leaguer'd Town embrace,
And one would pillage, one wou'd burn the Place.
Meantime the Townsmen, arm'd with silent Care,
A secret Ambush on the Foe prepare
Their Wives, their Children, and the watchful Band,
Of trembling Parents on the Turrets stand
They march, by *Pallas* and by *Mars* made bold,
Gold were the Gods, their radiant Garments Gold,
And Gold their Armour These the Squadron led,
August, Divine, Superior by the Head!
A Place for Ambush fit, they found, and stood
Cover'd with Shields, beside a silver Flood

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Two Spies at distance lurk, and watchful seem
If Sheep or Oxen seek the winding Stream
Soon the white Flocks proceeded o'er the Plains,
And Steers slow-moving, and two Shepherd Swains,
Behind them, piping on their Reeds, they go,
Nor fear an Ambush, nor suspect a Foe
In Arms the glitt'ring Squadron rising round
Rush sudden, Hills of Slaughter heap the Ground,
Whole Flocks and Herds lye bleeding on the Plains,
And, all amidst them, dead, the Shepherd Swains'
The bellowing Oxen the Besiegers hear,
They rise, take Horse, approach, and meet the War,
They fight, they fall, beside the silver Flood,
The waving Silver seem'd to blush with Blood
There Tumult, there Contention stood confess,
One rear'd a Dagger at a Captive's Breast,
One held a living Foe, that freshly bled
With new-made Wounds, another dragg'd a dead,
Now here, now there, the Carcasses they tore
Fate stalk'd amidst them, grim with human Gore
And the whole War came out, and met the Eye,
And each bold Figure seem'd to live, or die

A Field deep-furrow'd, next the God design'd,
The third time labour'd by the sweating Hind,
The shining Shares full many Plowmen guide,
And turn their crooked Yokes on ev'ry side
Still as at either End they wheel around,
The Master meets 'em with his Goblet crown'd,
The hearty Draught rewards, renews their Toil,
Then back the turning Plow-shares cleave the Soil
The new-ear'd Earth in blacker Ridges roll'd,
Sable it look'd, tho' form'd of molten Gold

Another Field rose high with waving Grain,
With bended Sickles stand the Reaper-Train

THE ILIAD

Here stretch'd in Ranks the level'd Swaths are found,
Sheaves heap'd on Sheaves, here thicken up the
Ground

With sweeping Stroke the Mowers strow the Lands,
The Gath'ers follow, and collect in Bands,
And last the Children, in whose Arms are born
(Too short to gripe them) the brown Sheaves of Corn
The rustic Monarch of the Field descries
With silent Glee, the Heaps around him rise
A ready Banquet on the Turf is laid,
Beneath an ample Oak's expanded Shade
The Victim-Ox the sturdy Youth prepare,
The Reaper's due Repast, the Women's Care

Next, ripe in yellow Gold, a Vineyard shines,
Bent with the pond'rous Harvest of its Vines,
A deeper Dye the dangling Clusters show,
And curl'd on silver Props, in order glow
A darker Metal mixt, intrench'd the Place,
And Pales of glitt'ring Tin th' Enclosure grace
To this, one Pathway gently winding leads,
Where march a Train with Baskets on their Heads,
(Fair Maids, and blooming Youths) that smiling
bear

The purple Product of th' Autumnal Year
To these a Youth awakes the warbling Strings,
Whose tender Lay the Fate of *Linus* sings,
In measur'd Dance behind him move the Train,
Tune soft the Voice, and answer to the Strain

Here, Herds of Oxen march, erect and bold,
Rear high their Horns, and seem to lowe in Gold,
And speed to Meadows on whose sounding Shores
A rapid Torrent thro' the Rushes roars
Four golden Herdsmen as their Guardians stand,
And nine four Dogs compleat the rustic Band

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Two Lions rushing from the Wood appear'd,
And seiz'd a Bull, the Master of the Herd
He roar'd in vain the Dogs, the Men withstood,
They tore his Flesh, and drank the sable Blood
The Dogs (oft' cheai'd in vain) desert the Prey,
Dread the grim Terrors, and at distance bay

Next this, the Eye the Art of Vulcan leads
Deep thro' fair Forests, and a Length of Meads,
And Stalls, and Folds, and scatter'd Cotts between,
And fleecy Flocks, that whiten all the Scene

A figur'd Dance succeeds Such once was seen
In lofty *Gnossus*, for the *Cretan Queen*,
Form'd by *Daedalean Art* A comely Band
Of Youths and Maidens, bounding Hand in Hand,
The Maids in soft Cymarrs of Linen drest,
The Youths all graceful in the glossy Vest,
Of those the Locks with flow'ry Wreaths inroll'd,
Of these the Sides adorn'd with Swords of Gold,
That glitt'ring gay, from silver Belts depend
Now all at once they rise, at once descend,
With well-taught Feet Now shape, in oblique ways,
Confus'dly regular, the moving Maze
Now forth at once, too swift for sight, they spring,
And undistinguish'd blend the flying Ring
So whirls a Wheel, in giddy Circle tost,
And rapid as it runs, the single Spokes are lost
The gazing Multitudes admire around,
Two active Tumblers in the Center bound,
Now high, now low, their pliant Limbs they bend,
And gen'ral Songs the sprightly Revel end

Thus the broad Shield complete the Artist crown'd
With his last Hand, and pour'd the Ocean round
In living Silver seem'd the Waves to roll,
And beat the Buckler's Verge, and bound the whole

FROM
THE ODYSSEY

Ulysses and His Dog

THUS, near the gates conferring as they drew,
Argus, the Dog, his ancient master knew,
He, not unconscious of the voice, and tread,
Lifts to the sound his ear, and tears his head.
Bred by *Ulysses*, nourish'd at his board,
But ah! not fated long to please his Lord!
To him, his swiftness and his strength were vain,
The voice of Glory call'd him o'er the main
'Till then in ev'ry sylvan chace renown'd,
With '*Argus*, *Argus*', rung the woods around,
With him the youth pursu'd the goat or fawn,
Or trac'd the mazy leveret o'er the lawn
Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
Un-hous'd, neglected, in the publick way,
And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
Obscene with reptile, took his sordid bed

He knew his Lord, he knew, and strove to meet,
In vain he strove, to crawl, and kiss his feet,
Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes
Salute his master, and confess his joys
Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul,
Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole,
Stole unperceiv'd, he turn'd his head, and dry'd
The drop humane then thus impassion'd cry'd.

'What noble beast in this abandon'd state
Lies here all helpless at *Ulysses'* gate?
His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise,
If, as he seems, he was, in better days,

Some care his Age deserves Or was he priz'd
 For worthless beauty? therefore now despis'd?
 Such dogs, and men there are, meer things of state,
 And always cherish'd by their friends, the Great'

'Not *Argus* so' (*Eumaeus* thus rejoin'd)

'But serv'd a master of a nobler kind,
 Who never, never shall behold him more!
 Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore!
 Oh had you seen him, vig'rous, bold and young,
 Swift as a stag, and as a lion strong,
 Him no fell Savage on the plain withstood,
 None 'scap'd him, bosom'd in the gloomy wood,
 His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
 To wind the vapour in the tainted dew?
 Such, when *Ulysses* left his natal coast,
 Now years un-nerve him, and his lord is lost!
 The women keep the gen'rous creature bare,
 A sleek and idle race is all their care
 The master gone, the servants what restraints?
 Or dwells humanity where riot reigns?
Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
 Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away'
 This said, the honest herdsman strode before
 The musing Monarch pauses at the door
 The Dog whom Fate had granted to behold
 His Lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
 Takes a last look, and having seen him, dies,
 So clos'd for ever faithful *Argus'* eyes!

FROM
THE DUNCIAD

The Triumph of Dulness

O MUSL! relate (for you can tell alone,
Wits have short Memories, and Dunces none)
Relate, who first, who last resign'd to rest,
Whose Heads she partly, whose completely bless'd,
What Charms could Faction, what Ambition, lull,
The Venal quiet, and entrance the Dull,
'Till drown'd was Sense, and Shame, and Right, and
Wrong —
O sing, and hush the Nations with thy Song'

*

In vain, in vain, — the all-composing Hour
Resistless falls the Muse obeys the Pow'r
She comes! she comes! the sable Throne behold
Of *Night* Primeval, and of *Chaos* old!
Before her, *Fancy*'s gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying Rain-bows die away
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain,
As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand opprest,
Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest,
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after *Art* goes out, and all is *Night*
See skulking *Truth* to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her head!

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Philosophy, that lean'd on Heav'n before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more
Physic or *Metaphysic* begs defence,
And *Metaphysic* calls for aid on *Sense*!
See *Mystery* to *Mathematics* fly!
In vain' they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
And unawares *Morality* expires
Nor *public* Flame, nor *private*, dares to shine,
Nor *human* Spark is left, nor *Glimpse divine*!
Lo! thy dread Empire, *CHAOS!* is restor'd,
Light dies before thy uncreating word
Thy hand, great *Anarch!* lets the curtain fall,
And universal Darkness buries All

FROM
AN ESSAY ON MAN

ADDRESSED TO HENRY ST JOHN,
LORD BOLINGBROKE¹

I Poem

AWAKE, my St John! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of Kings
Let us (since Life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of Man,
A mighty maze¹ but not without a plan,
A Wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot;
Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield,
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar,
Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
And catch the Manners living as they rise,
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to Man

II Hope Eternal

HEAV'N from all creatures hides the book of Fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state
From brutes what men, from men what spirits
know
Or who could suffer Being here below?

1. Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751), statesman and philosopher

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy Reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood
Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world

Hope humbly then, with trembling pinions soar,
Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that Hope to be thy blessing now
Hope springs eternal in the human breast
Man never Is, but always To be blest
The soul uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind,
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way,
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n,
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold
To Be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire,
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company

III The Proper Study

KNOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,
 The proper study of Mankind is Man
 Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
 A Being darkly wise, and rudely great
 With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
 With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
 He hangs between, in doubt to act, or rest,
 In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast,
 In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer,
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err,
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much
 Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confus'd,
 Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd,
 Created half to rise, and half to fall,
 Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all,
 Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurl'd
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!
 Go, wond'rous creature! mount where Science
 guides,
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides,
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
 Correct old Time, and regulate the Sun,
 Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair,
 Or tread the mazy round his follow'r's trod,
 And quitting sense call imitating God,
 As Eastern priests in giddy circles run,
 And turn their heads to imitate the Sun
 Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule —
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!

Superior beings, when of late they saw
 A mortal Man unfold all Nature's law,
 Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
 And show'd a NEWTON as we show an ape

Could he, whose rules the rapid Comet bind,
 Describe or fix one movement of his Mind?
 Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
 Explain his own beginning, or his end?
 Alas, what wonder! Man's superior part
 Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art,
 But when his own great work is but begun,
 What Reason weaves, by Passion is undone

Trace Science, then, with Modesty thy guide,
 First strip off all her equipage of Pride,
 Deduct what is but Vanity, or Dress,
 Or Learning's Luxury, or Idleness,
 Or tricks to show the stretch of human brain,
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenuous pain,
 Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts
 Of all our Vices have created Arts,
 Then see how little the remaining sum,
 Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come!

IV Opinion's Varying Rays

WHATE'ER the Passion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,
 Not one will change his neighbour with himself
 The learn'd is happy nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more,
 The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n,
 The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
 The sot a hero, lunatic a king,

AN ESSAY ON MAN

The starving chemist in his golden views
Supremely bless'd, the poet in his Muse

See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend
And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend,
See some fit Passion ev'ry age supply,
Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw
Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age.
Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before,
Till tir'd he sleeps, and Life's poor play is o'er

Mean-while Opinion gilds with varying rays
Those painted clouds that beautify our days,
Each want of happiness by Hope supply'd,
And each vacuity of sense by Pride
These build as fast as knowledge can destroy;
In Folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy,
One prospect lost, another still we gain,
And not a vanity is giv'n in vain,
Ev'n mean Self-love becomes, by force divine,
The scale to measure others wants by thine
See! and confess, one comfort still must rise,
'Tis this, Tho' Man's a fool, yet God is wise

V Happiness

OH Happiness! our being's end and aim!
Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name
That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,
O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool, and wise
Plant of celestial seed! if dropt below,
Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?
Fair op'ning to some Court's propitious shine,
Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine?
Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,
Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?
Where grows? — where grows it not? If vain our toil,
We ought to blame the culture, not the soil
Fix'd to no spot is Happiness sincere,
'Tis nowhere to be found, or every where,
'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
And, fled from Monarchs, ST JOHN¹ dwells with thee

VI Calm Sunshine or Shame

WHAT nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,
Is Virtue's prize A better would you fix?
Then give Humility a coach and six,
Justice a Conqu'ror's sword, or Truth a gown,
Or Public Spirit its great cure, a Crown
Weak, foolish man! will Heav'n reward us there
With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?
The Boy and Man an individual makes,
Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes?
Go, like the Indian, in another life
Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife,
As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
As toys and empires, for a god-like mind
Rewards, that either would to Virtue bring
No joy, or be destructive of the thing,

AN I SSAY O N M A N

How oft by these at sixty are undone
The virtues of a saint at twenty-one!
To whom can Riches give Repute, or Trust,
Content, or Pleasure, but the Good and Just?
Judges and Senates have been bought for gold,
Esteem and Love were never to be sold
Oh fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
The lover and the love of human-kind,
Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
Because he wants a thousand pounds a year

Honour and shame from no Condition rise,
Act well your part, there all the honour lies
Fortune in Men has some small diff'rence made —
One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade,
The cobler apion'd, and the parson gown'd,
The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd
'What differ more' (you cry) 'than crown and cowl?'
I'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool
You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
Or, cobler-like, the parson will be drunk,
Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,
The rest is all but leather or prunella

Stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with strings,
That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings,
Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece
But by your fathers' worth if your's you rate,
Count me those only who were good and great
Go! if your ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood,
Go! and pretend your family is young,
Nor own, your fathers have been fools so long
What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the HOWARDS

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Look next on Greatness, say where Greatness lies?
‘Where, but among the Heroes and the Wise?’
Heroes are much the same, the point’s agreed,
From Macedonia’s madman to the Swede,¹
The whole strange purpose of their lives to find
Or make an enemy of all mankind!
Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
Yet ne’er looks forward farther than his nose
No less alike the Politic and Wise,
All sly slow things, with circumspective eyes
Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,
Not that themselves are wise, but others weak
But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat,
‘Tis phrase absurd to call a Villain Great
Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
Is but the more a fool, the more a knave
Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed
Like Socrates, that Man is great indeed

What’s Fame? A fancied life in others’ breath,
A thing beyond us, ev’n before our death
Just what you hear, you have, and what’s unknown
The same (my Lord) if Tully’s, or your own
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends,
To all beside as much an empty shade
An Eugene² living, as a Caesar dead,
Alike or when, or where, they shone, or shine,
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine
A Wit’s a feather, and a Chief a rod,
An honest Man’s the noblest work of God

1 Alexander the Great, and Charles XII of Sweden

2 Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736)

AN ESSAY ON MAN

Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
As Justice tears his body from the grave,
When what t' oblivion better were resign'd,
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind
All fame is foreign, but of true desert,
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart-
One self-approving hour whole years out-weighs
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas,
And more true joy Marcellus¹ exil'd feels,
Than Caesar with a senate at his heels

In Parts superior what advantage lies?
Tell (for You can) what is it to be wise?
'Tis but to know how little can be known,
To see all others' faults, and feel our own
Condemn'd in business or in arts to drudge,
Without a second, or without a judge
Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land?
All fear, none aid you, and few understand
Painful pre-eminence! yourself to view
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too

Bring then these blessings to a strict account,
Make fair deductions, see to what they mount
How much of other each is sure to cost,
How each for other oft is wholly lost,
How inconsistent greater goods with these,
How sometimes life is risqu'd, and always ease
Think, and if still the things thy envy call,
Say, would'st thou be the Man to whom they fall?
To sigh for ribands if you art so silly,
Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy
Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life?
Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife

1. An opponent of Caesar

POLMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

If Parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind
Or, ravish'd with the whistling of a Name,
See Cromwell, damn'd to everlasting fame!
If all, united, thy ambition call,
From ancient story learn to scorn them all
There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
See the false scale of happiness complete!
In hearts of Kings, or arms of Queens who lay,
How happy! those to ruin, these betray
Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose,
In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
And all that raised the Hero, sunk the Man
Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold,
But stam'd with blood, or ill exchang'd for gold
Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,
Or infamous for plunder'd provinces
Oh wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame
E'er taught to shine, or sanctify'd from shame!
What greater bliss attends their close of life?
Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,
The trophy'd arches, story'd halls invade,
And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.
Alas! not dazzled with their noontide ray,
Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day,
The whole amount of that enormous fame,
A Tale, that blends their glory with their shame!

VII Epilogue

Come then, my Friend, my Genius! come along,
O master of the poet, and the song!
And while the Muse now stoops, or now ascends,
To Man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise,
Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe,
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please
Oh! while along the stream of Time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?
That, urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart,
For Wit's false mirror held up Nature's light,
Show'd erring Pride, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT,
That REASON, PASSION, answer one great aim,
That true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the same,
That VIRTUE only makes our Bliss below,
And all our Knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW

MORAL ESSAYS

ESSAYS I

TO

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, LORD COBHAM¹

Of the Knowledge and Characters

of Men

I

Yrs, you despise the man to Books confin'd,
Who from his study rails at human kind,
Tho' what he learns he speaks, and may advance
Some gen'ral maxims, or be right by chance
The coxcomb bird, so talkative and grave,
That from his cage cries Cuckold, Whore, and Knave,
Tho' many a passenger he rightly call,
You hold him no Philosopher at all

And yet the fate of all extremes is such,
Men may be read, as well as Books, too much
To observations which ourselves we make,
We grow more partial for th' Observer's sake,
To written Wisdom, as another's, less.
Maxims are drawn from Notions, those from Guess
There's some Peculiar in each leaf and grain,
Some unmark'd fibre, or some varying vein
Shall only Man be taken in the gross?
Grant but as many sorts of Mind as Moss²

That each from other differs, first confess,
Next, that he varies from himself no less
Add Nature's, Custom's, Reason's, Passion's strife,
And all Opinion's colours cast on life

1 Viscount Cobham (1669–1749), general, politician and friend of Pope's

2 There are above 300 sorts of moss observed by naturalists *P.*

MORAL ESSAYS

Our depths who fathoms, or our shallows finds,
Quick whirls, and shifting eddies, of our minds
On human Actions reason though you can,
It may be Reason, but it is not Man
His Principle of action once explore,
That instant 'tis his Principle no more
Like following life through creatures you dissect,
You lose it in the moment you detect

Yet more, the diff'rence is as great between
The optics seeing, as the objects seen
All Manners take a tincture from our own,
Or comic discolour'd, through our Passions shown,
Or Fancy's beam enlarges, multiplies,
Contracts, inverts, and gives ten thousand dyes

Nor will Life's stream for Observation stay,
It hurries all too fast to mark their way
In vain sedate reflections we would make,
When half our knowledge we must snatch, not take.
Oft, in the Passions' wild rotation toss'd,
Our spring of action to ourselves is lost
Tir'd, not determin'd, to the last we yield,
And what comes then is master of the field
As the last image of that troubled heap,
When Sense subsides, and Fancy sports in sleep,
(Tho' past the recollection of the thought),
Becomes the stuff of which our dream is wrought
Something as dim to our internal view,
Is thus, perhaps, the cause of most we do

True, some are open, and to all men known,
Others so very close they're hid from none,
(So Darkness strikes the sense no less than Light)
Thus gracious CHANDOS¹ is belov'd at sight,

1 James Brydges, Duke of Chandos (1673–1744)

And ev'ry child hates Shylock, tho' his soul
 Still sits at squat, and peeps not from its hole
 At half mankind when gen'rous Manly¹ raves,
 All know 'tis Virtue, for he thinks them knaves
 When universal homage Umbra pays,
 All see 'tis Vice, and itch of vulgar praise
 When Flatt'ry glares, all hate it in a Queen,
 While one there is who charms us with his Spleen.

But these plain Characters we rarely find,
 Tho' strong the bent, yet quick the turns of mind
 Of puzzling Contraries confound the whole,
 Or Affectations quite reverse the soul
 The Dull, flat Falschood serves for policy,
 And, in the Cunning, Truth itself's a lie
 Unthought-of Fraughties cheat us in the Wise,
 The Fool lies hid in inconsistencies

See the same man, in vigour, in the gout,
 Alone, in company, in place, or out,
 Early at Bus'ness, and at Hazard late,
 Mad at a Fox-chace, wise at a Debate,
 Drunk at a Borough, civil at a Ball,
 Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall

Catus is ever moral, ever grave,
 Thinks who endures a knave, is next a knave,
 Save just at dinner — then prefers, no doubt,
 A Rogue with Ven'son to a Saint without

Who would not praise Patritio's high desert,
 His hand unstain'd, his uncorrupted heart,
 His comprehensive head! all Int'rests weigh'd,
 All Europe sav'd, yet Britain not betray'd?
 He thanks you not, his pride is in Picquette,
 New-market fame, and judgment at a Bet

1. Character in Wycherley's comedy of the *Plain Dealer*

What made (say Montaigne, or more sage
Charron¹)

Ortho a warrior, Cromwell a buffoon,
A perjur'd Prince a leaden Saint revere,²
A godless Regent tremble at a Star³
The throne a Bigot keep, a Genius quit,
Faithless through Piety, and dup'd through Wit⁴
Europe a Woman, Child, or Dotard rule,
And just her wisest monarch made a fool.

Know, GOD and NATURE only are the same
In Man, the judgment shoots at flying game,
A bird of passage¹ gone as soon as found,
Now in the Moon perhaps, now under ground

II

In vain the Sage, with retrospective eye,
Would from th' apparent What conclude the Why,
Infer the Motive from the Deed, and shew
That what we chanc'd was what we meant to do
Behold['] it Fortune or a Mistress frowns,
Some plunge in bus'ness, others shave their crowns
To ease the Soul of one oppressive weight,
This quits an Empire, that embroils a State

1 An imitator of Montaigne

2 Louis XI of France wore in his hat a leaden image of the Virgin Mary, which when he swore by he feared to break his oath *P*

3 Philip, Duke of Orleans, Regent in the minority of Louis XV, superstitious in judicial astrology, though an unbeliever in all religion *P*

4 Philip V of Spain, who, after renouncing the throne for religion, resumed it to gratify his queen, and Victor Amadeus II, King of Sardinia, who resigned the crown, and, trying to re-assume it, was imprisoned till his death *P*

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

The same adust complexion has impell'd
Charles to the Convent, Philip to the Field ¹

Not always Actions show the man we find
Who does a kindness, is not therefore kind,
Perhaps Prosperity becalm'd his breast,
Perhaps the Wind just shifted from the east
Not therefore humble he who seeks retreat,
Pride guides his steps, and bids him shun the
great

Who combats bravely is not therefore brave,
He dreads a death-bed like the meanest slave
Who reasons wisely is not therefore wise,
His pride in Reas'ning, not in acting Lies

But grant that Actions best discover man,
Take the most strong, and sort them as you can
The few that glare each character must mark,
You balance not the many in the dark
What will you do with such as disagree?
Suppress them, or miscall them Policy?
Must then at once (the character to save)
The plain rough Hero turn a crafty Knave?
Alas! in truth the man but chang'd his mind,
Perhaps was sick, in love, or had not dim'd
Ask why from Britain Caesar would retreat?
Caesar himself might whisper he was beat
Why risk the world's great empire for a Punk?
Caesar perhaps might answer he was drunk
But, sage historians! 'tis your task to prove
One action, Conduct, one, heroic Love

'Tis from high Life high Characters are drawn;
A Saint in Crape is twice a Saint in Lawn,
A Judge is just, a Chanc'lor juster still,
A Gownman, learn'd, a Bishop, what you will,

1 Charles V and Philip II of Spain

Wise, if a Minister but, if a King,
More wise, more learn'd, more just, more ev'ry
thing

Court-Virtues bear, like Gems, the highest rate,
Born where Heav'n's influence scarce can penetrate:
In life's low vale, the soil the Virtues like,
They please as beauties, here as wonders strike
Tho' the same Sun with all-diffusive rays
Blush in the Rose, and in the Di'mond blaze,
We prize the stronger effort of his pow'r,
And justly set the Gem above the Flow'r

"Tis Education forms the common mind,
Just as the Twig is bent, the Tree's inclin'd
Boastful and rough, your first son is a 'Squire;
The next a Tradesman, meek, and much a liar,
Tom struts a Soldier, open, bold, and brave,
Will sneaks a Scriv'ne^r, an exceeding knave
Is he a Churchman? then he's fond of pow'r
A Quaker? sly A Presbyterian? sour }
A smart Free-thinker? all things in an hour }

Ask men's Opinions Scoto now shall tell
How Trade increases, and the World goes well,
Strike off his Pension, by the setting sun,
And Britain, if not Europe, is undone

That gay Free-thinker, a fine talker once,
What turns him now a stupid silent dunce?
Some God, or Spirit he has lately found,
Or chanc'd to meet a Minister that frown'd

Judge we by Nature? Habit can efface,
Int'rest o'ercome, or Policy take place
By Actions? those Uncertainty divides
By Passions? these Dissimulation hides
Opinions? they still take a wider range
Find, if you can, in what you cannot change

Manners with Fortunes, Humours turn with
 Climes,
 Tenets with Books, and Principles with Times

III

Search, then, the RULING PASSION There, alone,
 The Wild are constant, and the Cunning known,
 The Fool consistent, and the False sincere,
 Priests, Princes, Women, no dissemblers here
 This clue once found, unravels all the rest,
 The prospect clears, and WHARTON stands confess'd¹
 Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
 Whose Ruling Passion was the Lust of Praise
 Born with whate'er could win it from the Wise,
 Women and Fools must like him or he dies,
 Tho' wondering Senates hung on all he spoke,
 The Club must hail him master of the joke
 Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
 He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot² too
 Then turns repentant, and his God adores
 With the same spirit that he drinks and whores,
 Enough, if all around him but admire,
 And now the Punk applaud, and now the Friar
 Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
 And wanting nothing but an honest heart,
 Grown all to all, from no one Vice exempt,
 And most contemptible, to shun contempt,

1 Philip Wharton, Duke of Wharton (1698–1731), statesman and brilliant orator, outlawed for Jacobitism, 1729

2 John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, famous for his wit and extravagances in the time of Charles II *P*

MORAL ESSAYS

His Passion still to covet gen'ral praise,
His Life, to forfeit it a thousand ways,
A constant Bounty which no friend has made,
An angel Tongue, which no man can persuade,
A Fool, with more of Wit than half mankind,
Too rash for Thought, for Action too rehn'd,
A Tyrant to the wife his heart approves,
A Rebel to the very king he loves,
He dies, sad out-cast of each church and state,
And, harder still! flagitious, yet not great
Ask you why Wharton broke through ev'ry rule?
'Twas all for fear the Knaves should call him Fool
Nature well known, no prodigies remain,
Comets are regular, and WHARTON plain

Yet, in this search, the wisest may mistake,
If second qualities for first they take
When Catiline by rapine swell'd his store,
When Caesar made a noble dame a whore,
In this the Lust, in that the Avarice
Were means, not ends, Ambition was the vice
That very Caesar, born in Scipio's days,
Had aim'd, like him, by Chastity at praise.
Lucullus, when Frugality could charm,
Had roasted turnips in the Sabin farm.
In vain th' observer eyes the builder's toil,
But quite mistakes the scaffold for the pile

In this one Passion man can strength enjoy,
As Fits give vigour, just when they destroy
Time, that on all things lays his lenient hand,
Yet tames not this, it sticks to our last sand
Consistent in our follies and our sins,
Here honest Nature ends as she begins

Old Politicians chew on wisdom past,
And totter on in bus'ness to the last,

POLMS OF ALLEXANDER POPE

As weak, as earnest, and as gravely out,
As sober Lanesh'row dancing in the gout¹

Behold a rev'rend sire, whom want of grace
Has made the father of a nameless race,
Shov'd from the wall perhaps, or rudely press'd
By his own son, that passes by unbliss'd
Still to his wench he crawls on knocking knees,
And envies ev'ry sparrow that he sees

A salmon's belly, Helluo, was thy fate,
The doctor call'd, declares all help too late
'Mercy!' cries Helluo, 'mercy on my soul'
Is there no hope? — Alas! — then bring the jowl'

The frugal Crone, whom praying priests attend,
Still tries to save the hallow'd taper's end,
Collects her breath, as ebbing life retires,
For one puff more, and in that puff expires

'Odious! in woollen! 'twould a Saint provoke,'
(Were the last words that poor Narcissa² spoke),
'No, let a charming Chintz and Brussels lace
Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face
One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead —
And — Betty — give this Cheek a little Red'

The Courtier smooth, who forty years had shin'd
An humble servant to all human kind,
Just brought out this, when scarce his tongue could
stir,

'If — where I'm going — I could serve you, Sir?'

1 An ancient nobleman, who continued this practice long after his legs were disabled by the gout. Upon the death of Prince George of Denmark, he demanded an audience of the Queen, to advise her to preserve her health and dispel her grief by dancing P

2 Several attribute this to a very celebrated actress, who in detestation of the thought of being buried in woollen, gave these last orders with her dying breath P An act of 1678 to protect the woollen industry obliged the dead to be buried in woollen

'I give and I devise' (old Euchio said,
 And sigh'd) 'my lands and tenements to Ned'
 'Your money, Sir?' 'My money, Sir, what all -
 Why - if I must' - (then wept) 'I give it Paul'
 'The Manor, Sir?' - 'The Manor! hold' (he cried),
 'Not that, - I cannot part with that' - and died

And you, brave COBHAM¹ to the latest breath
 Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death
 Such in those moments as in all the past,
 'Oh, save my Country, Heav'n!' shall be your last

EPISTLE II

TO A LADY¹*Of the Characters of WOMEN*

NOTHING so true as what you once let fall,
 'Most Women have no Characters at all'
 Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
 And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair

How many pictures of one Nymph we view,
 All how unlike each other, all how true!
 Arcadia's Countess, here, in ermin'd pride,
 Is there, Pastora by a fountain side
 Here Fannia, leering on her own good man,
 And there, a naked Leda with a Swan
 Let then the Fair one beautifully cry,
 In Magdalen's loose hair and lifted eye,
 Or dress'd in smiles of sweet Cecilia shine,
 With simp'ring Angels, Palms, and Harps divine,
 Whether the Charmer sinner it or saint it,
 If Folly grow romantic, I must paint it

1 Martha Blount, see p 81, n 1

Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!
 Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air,
 Choose a firm Cloud, before it fall, and in it
 Catch, e'er she change, the Cynthia of this minute

Rufa, whose eye quick-glancing o'er the Park,
 Attracts each light gay meteor of a Spark,
 Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
 As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock,
 Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
 With Sappho fragrant at an ev'ning Mask
 So morning Insects that in muck begun,
 Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting sun

How soft is Silia! fearful to offend,
 The frail one's advocate, the weak one's friend
 To her, Calista prov'd her conduct nice,
 And good Simplicius asks of her advice
 Sudden, she storms! she raves! You tip the wmk,
 But spare your censure, Silia does not drink
 All eyes may see from what the change arose,
 All eyes may see — a Pimple on her nose

Papillia, wedded to her am'rous spark,
 Sighs for the shades! — 'How charming is a Park!'
 A Park is purchas'd, but the Fair he sees
 All bath'd in tears — 'Oh odious, odious Trees!'

Ladies, like variegated Tulips, show,
 'Tis to their Changes half their charms we owe,
 Fine by defect, and delicately weak,
 Their happy Spots the nice admirer take
 'Twas thus Calypso once each heart alarm'd,
 Aw'd without Virtue, without Beauty charm'd,
 Her Tongue bewitch'd as oddly as her Eyes,
 Less Wit than Mimic, more a Wit than wise,
 Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
 Was just not ugly, and was just not mad,

MORAL ESSAYS

Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
As when she touch'd the drink of all we hate
 Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
To make a wash, would hardly stew a child,
Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a Lover's pray'r,
And paid a Tradesman once, to make him stare,
Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
And made a Widow happy, for a whim
Why then declare Good-nature is her scorn,
When 'tis by that alone she can be born?
Why pique all mortals, yet affect a name?
A tool to Pleasure, yet a slave to Fame
Now deep in Taylor and the Book of Martyrs,¹
Now drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres²
Now Conscience chills her, and now Passion burns,
And Atheism and Religion take their turns,
A very Heathen in the carnal part,
Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart

 See Sin in State, majestically drunk,
Proud as a Peeress, prouder as a Punk,
Chaste to her Husband, frank to all beside,
A teeming Mistress, but a barren Bride
What then? let Blood and Body bear the fault,
Her Head's untouched, that noble seat of Thought
Such this day's doctrine — in another fit
She sins with Poets through pure Love of Wit
What has not fir'd her bosom or her brain —
Caesar and Tall-boy,³ Charles and Charlema'ne?
As Helluo, late Dictator of the Feast,
The Nose of Haut goût, and the Tip of Taste,

1 Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, and John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*

2 See p. 149, n. 1

3 Character in a comic opera, *The Jovial Crew*.

Critiqu'd your wine, and analyz'd your meat,
 Yet on plain pudding deign'd at home to eat,
 So Philomedé, lect'ring all mankind
 On the soft Passion and the Taste refin'd,
 Th' Address, the Delicacy — stoops at once,
 And makes her hearty meal upon a Dunce

Flavia's a Wit, has too much sense to pray,
 To toast our wants and wishes, is her way,
 Nor asks of God, but of her Stars, to give
 The mighty blessing, 'While we live, to live'
 Then all for Death, that Opiate of the soul!
 Lucretia's dagger, Rosamonda's bowl
 Say, what can cause such impotence of mind?
 A Spark too fickle, or a Spouse too kind
 Wise Wretch! with pleasures too refin'd to please,
 With too much Spirit to be e'er at ease,
 With too much Quickness ever to be taught,
 With too much Thinking to have common Thought
 You purchase Pain with all that Joy can give,
 And die of nothing, but a Rage to live

Turn then from Wits, and look on Simo's Mate,
 No Ass so meek, no Ass so obstinate
 Or her, that owns her Faults, but never mends,
 Because she's honest, and the best of Friends
 Or her, whose life the Church and Scandal share,
 For ever in a Passion or a Pray'r
 Or her, who laughs at Hell, but (like her Grace)
 Cries, 'Ah! how charming, if there's no such place!'
 Or who in sweet vicissitude appears
 Of Mirth and Opium, Ratafie and Tears,
 The daily Anodyne, and nightly Draught,
 To kill those foes to fair ones, Time and Thought
 Woman and Fool are two hard things to hit,
 For true No-meaning puzzles more than Wit

But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
 Scarce once herself, by turns all Womankind!
 Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
 Finds all her life one warfare upon earth
 Shines, in exposing knaves, and painting Fools,
 Yet is whate'er she hates and ridicules
 No Thought advances, but her Eddy Brain
 Whisks it about, and down it goes again
 Full sixty years the World has been her Trade,
 The wisest Fool much Time has ever made
 From loveless Youth to unrespected Age,
 No Passion gratified, except her Rage
 So much the Fury still out-ran the Wit,
 The Pleasure miss'd her, and the Scandal hit
 Who breaks with her, provokes Revenge from Hell,
 But he's a bolder man who dares be well
 Her ev'ry turn with Violence pursu'd,
 Nor more a storm her Hate than Gratitude
 To that each Passion turns, or soon or late,
 Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate
 Superiors' death¹ and Equals² what a curse!
 But an Inferior not dependent³ worse!
 Offend her, and she knows not to forgive
 Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live
 But die, and she'll adore you — Then the Bust
 And Temple rise — then fall again to dust
 Last night, her Lord was all that's good and great
 A Knave this morning, and his Will a Cheat
 Strange! by the Means defeated of the Ends,
 By Spirit robb'd of Pow'r, by Warmth of Friends,
 By Wealth of Follow'r's without one distress,
 Sick of herself through very selfishness!
 Atossa, curs'd with ev'ry granted pray'r,
 Childless with all her Children, wants an Heir

To Hens unknown descends th' unguarded store,
Or wand'rs, Heav'n-directed, to the Poor

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line,
Some wand'ring touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right
For how should equal Colours do the knack?
Chameleons who can paint in white and black.

'Yet Cloe, sure, was form'd without a spot' —
Nature in her then err'd not, but forgot

'With ev'ry pleasing, ev'ry prudent part,
Say, what can Cloe want?' — She wants a Heart
She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought,
But never, never reach'd one gen'rous Thought
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
Content to dwell in Decencies for ever
So very reasonable, so unmov'd,
As never yet to love, or to be lov'd
She, while her Lover pants upon her breast,
Can mark the figures on an Indian chest,
And when she sees her Friend in deep despan,
Observes how much a Chintz exceeds Mohair
Forbid it, Heav'n, a Favour or a Debt
She e'er should cancel! — but she may forget
Safe is your Secret still in Cloe's ear,
But none of Cloe's shall you ever hear
Of all her Dears she never slander'd one,
But cares not if a thousand are undone
Would Cloe know if you're alive or dead?
She bids her Footman put it in her head
Cloe is prudent — Would you, too, be wise?
Then never break your heart when Cloe dies

One certain portrait may (I grant) be seen,
Which Heav'n has varnish'd out, and made a *Queen*:

MORAL ESSAYS

THE SAME FOR EVER¹ and describ'd by all
With Truth and Goodness, as with Crown and Ball
Poets heap Virtues, Painters Gems at will,
And show them zeal, and hide their want of skill
'Tis well – but, Artists² who can paint or write,
To draw the Naked is your true delight
That Robe of Quality so stiuts and swells,
None see what Parts of Nature it conceals
Th' exactest traits of Body or of Mind,
We owe to models of an humble kind,
If QUEENSBERRY² to strip there's no compelling,
'Tis from a Handmaid we must take an Helen
From Peer or Bishop 'tis no easy thing
To draw the man who loves his God, or King
Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)
From honest Mah'met,² or plain Parson Hale³

But grant, in Public, Men sometimes are shown,
A Woman's seen in Private Life alone
Our bolder Talents in full light display'd,
Your Virtues open fairest in the shade
Bred to disguise, in Public 'tis you hide;
There, none distinguish 'twixt your Shame or Pride,
Weakness or Delicacy, all so nice,
That each may seem a Virtue, or a Vice
In Men, we various Ruling Passions find,
In Women, two almost divide the kind,
Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,
The Love of Pleasure, and the Love of Sway

1 Catherine Douglas, Duchess of Queensberry (d. 1777), an eccentric beauty

2 Servant to the late king, said to be the son of a Turkish Bassa P

3 Dr Stephen Hale, not more estimable for his useful discoveries as a natural philosopher, than for his exemplary life as a parish priest P

That, Nature gives, and where the lesson taught
Is but to please, can Pleasure seem a fault?
Experience, thus, by Man's oppression curst,
They seek the second not to lose the first

Men, some to Bus'ness, some to Pleasure take,
But ev'ry Woman is at heart a Rake
Men, some to Quiet, some to public Strife,
But ev'ry Lady would be Queen for life

Yet mark the fate of a whole sex of Queens!
Pow' r all their end, but Beauty all the means
In Youth they conquer, with so wild a rage,
As leaves them scarce a subject in their Age
For foreign glory, foreign joy, they roam,
No thought of peace or happiness at home
But Wisdom's triumph is well-tim'd Retreat,
As hard a science to the Fair as Great!
Beauties, like Tyrants, old and friendless grown,
Yet hate repose, and dread to be alone,
Worn out in public, weary ev'ry eye,
Nor leave one sigh behind them when they die

Pleasures the sex, as children Birds, pursue,
Still out of reach, yet never out of view;
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the Toy at most,
To covet flying, and regret when lost
At last, to follies Youth could scarce defend,
It grows their Age's prudence to pretend,
Asham'd to own they gave delight before,
Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more
As Hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than spight,
So these their merry, miserable Night,
Still round and round the Ghosts of Beauty glide,
And haunt the places where their honour died

See how the World its Veterans rewards!
A Youth of Frolics, an old Age of Cards,

Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
 Young without Lovers, old without a Friend,
 A Fop their Passion, but their Prize a Sot,
 Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!

Ah, Friend! to dazzle let the Vain design
 To raise the Thought, and touch the Heart, be thine!
 That Charm shall grow, while what fatigues the Ring,
 Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing
 So when the Sun's broad beam has tir'd the sight,
 All mild ascends the Moon's more sober light,
 Serene in Virgin Modesty she shines,
 And unobserv'd the glaring Orb declines

Oh! blest with Temper, whose unclouded ray
 Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day,
 She, who can love a Sister's charms, or hear
 Sighs for a Daughter with unwounded ear,
 She, who ne'er answers till a Husband cools,
 Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules,
 Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
 Yet has her humour most, when she obeys,
 Let Fops or Fortune fly which way they will,
 Disdains all loss of Tickets, or Codille,
 Spleen, Vapours, or Small-pox, above them all,
 And Mistress of herself, though China fall

And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
 Woman's at best a Contradiction still
 Heav'n, when it strives to polish all it can
 Its last, best work, but forms a softer Man,
 Picks from each sex, to make the Fav'rite blest,
 Your love of Pleasure, our desire of Rest
 Blends, in exception to all gen'ral rules,
 Your Taste of Follies, with our Scorn of Fools.

1 See p. 41, n. 1

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Reserve with Frankness, Art with Truth allied,
Courage with Softness, Modesty with Pride,
Fix'd Principles, with Fancy ever new,
Shakes all together, and produces — You

Be this a Woman's Fame with this unblest,
Toasts live a scorn, and Queens may die a jest
This Phoebus promis'd (I forget the year)
When those blue eyes first open'd on the sphere,
Ascendant Phoebus watch'd that hour with care,
Averted half your Parents' simple Prayer,
And gave you Beauty, but deny'd the Pelt
That buys your Sex a Tyrant o'er itself
The gen'rous God, who Wit and Gold refines,
And ripens Spirits as he ripens Mines,
Kept Dross for Duchesses, the world shall know it,
To you gave Sense, Good-humour, and a Poet

EPISTLE III

TO ALLEN LORD BATHURST¹

Of the Use of RICHES

P Who shall decide, when Doctors disagree,
And soundest Casuists doubt, like you and me?
You hold the word, from Jove to Momus giv'n,
That Man was made the standing jest of Heav'n.
And Gold but sent to keep the fools in play,
For some to heap, and some to throw away

But I, who think more highly of our kind,
(And, surely, Heav'n and I are of a mind)
Opine, that Nature, as in duty bound.
Deep hid the shining mischief under ground

1 Allen Apsley, Lord Bathurst (1684–1775), M.P., and friend of Pope's

MORAL ESSAYS

But when, by Man's audacious labour won,
Flam'd forth this rival to its Sire, the Sun,
Then careful Heav'n supply'd two sorts of Men,
To squander These, and Those to hide agen

Like Doctors thus, when much dispute has pass'd,
We find our tenets just the same at last
Both fairly owning, Riches, in effect,
No grace of Heav'n or token of th' Elect,
Giv'n to the Fool, the Mad, the Vain, the Evil,
To Ward, to Waters, Chartres, and the Devil¹

B What Nature wants, commodious Gold be-
stows,
'Tis thus we eat the bread another sows
P But how unequal it bestows, observe,
'Tis thus we riot, while who sow it starve
What Nature wants (a phrase I much distrust)
Extends to Luxury, extends to Lust
Useful, I grant, it serves what life requires,
But dreadful too, the dark Assassin hires

1 John Ward, of Hackney, Esq , member of Parliament, being prose-
cuted and convicted of forgery, was first expelled the House,
and then stood in the pillory During his confinement, his amuse-
ment was to give poison to dogs and cats, and see them expire by
slower or quicker torments Francis Chartres, a man infamous
for all manner of vices When he was an ensign in the army, he
was drummed out of the regiment for a cheat After a hundred
tricks at the gaming tables, he took to lending money at an exor-
bitant interest in a word, by the constant attention to the vices,
wants, and follies of mankind, he acquired an immense fortune
His house was a perpetual bawdy-house He was twice condemned
for rapes, and pardoned He died in Scotland, in 1781, aged sixty-
two The populace at his funeral raised a great riot, almost tore
the body out of the coffin, and cast dead dogs, etc , into the grave
along with it Mr Waters, the third of these worthies, was a man
no way resembling the former in his military, but extremely so in
his civil capacity , his great fortune having been raised by the like
attendance on the necessities of others P

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

B Trade it may help, Society extend
P But lures the Pirate, and corrupts the Friend
B It raises Armies in a Nation's aid
P But bribes a Senate, and the Land's betray'd
In vain may Heroes fight, and Patriots rave,
It secret Gold sap on from knave to knave
Once, we confess, beneath the Patriot's cloak,¹
From the crack'd bag the dropping Guinea spoke,
And jingling down the back-stairs, told the crew,
'Old Cato is as great a Rogue as you'
Blest paper-credit! last and best supply!
That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly!
Gold imp'd by thee, can compass hardest things,
Can pocket States, can fetch or carry Kings,
A single leaf shall waft an Army o'er,
Or ship off Senates to a distant shore,²
A leaf, like Sibyl's, scatter to and fro
Our fates and fortunes, as the winds shall blow
Pregnant with thousands flits the Scrap unseen,
And silent sells a King, or buys a Queen,
Oh! that such Bulky bribes as all might see,
Still, as of old, encumber'd Villainy!
Could France or Rome divert our brave designs,
With all their brandies, or with all their wines?
What could they more than Knights and Squires confound,
Or water all the Quorum ten miles round?

1 This is a true story, which happened in the reign of William III to an unsuspected old patriot, who, coming out of the back-door from having been closeted by the king, where he had received a large bag of guineas, the bursting of the bag discovered his business there P

2 Alludes to several ministers, councillors, and patriots, banished in our time to Siberia, and to that more glorious fate of the Parliament of Paris, banished to Pontoise in the year 1720 P

A Statesman's slumbers how this speech would
spoil!

'Sir, Spain has sent a thousand jars of oil,
Huge bales of British cloth blockade the door,
A hundred ovens at your levée roar'

Poor Avarice one torment more would find,
Nor could Profligacy squander all in kind
Astride his cheese, Sir Morgan might we meet,
And Worldly crying coals from street to street,¹
Whom, with a wig so wild, and mien so maz'd,
Pity mistakes for some poor tradesman craz'd
Had Colepepper's whole wealth been hops and hogs,
Could he himself have sent it to the dogs?²
His Grace will game to White's³ a Bull be led,
With spurning heels, and with a butting head
To White's be carry'd, as to ancient games,
Fair Coursers, Vases, and alluring Dames
Shall then Uxorio, if the stakes he sweep,
Bear home six Whores and make his Lady weep?
Or soft Adonis, so perfum'd and fine,
Drive to St James's a whole herd of swine?
Oh filthy check on all industrious skill,
To spoil the nation's last great trade, Quadrille!

1 Some misers of great wealth, proprietors of the coal-mines, had entered at this time into an association to keep up coals to an extravagant price, whereby the poor were reduced almost to starve, till one of them, taking advantage of underselling the rest, defeated the design. One of these misers was worth ten thousand, another seven thousand a year. *P.*

2 Sir William Colepepper, Bart, a person of an ancient family, and ample fortune, without one other quality of a gentleman, who, after ruining himself at the gaming-table, passed the rest of his days in sitting there to see the ruin of others preferring to subsist upon borrowing and begging rather than to enter into any reputable method of life. *P.*

3 White's Chocolate House in St James's Street, a haunt of gamblers.

The grave Sir Gilbert holds it for a rule,
 That 'ev'ry man in want is knave or fool '¹
 'God cannot love' (says Blunt, with tearless eyes)²
 'The wretch he starves' – and piously denies
 But the good Bishop, with a meeker air,
 Admits, and leaves them, Providence's care

Yet, to be just to these poor men of pelf,
 Each does but hate his neighbour as himself
 Damn'd to the Mines, an equal fate betides
 The Slave that digs it, and the Slave that hides

B Who suffer thus, mere charity should own,
 Must act on motives pow'ful, tho' unknown

P Some War, some Plague, or Famine they foresee,

Some Revelation hid from you and me
 Why Shylock wants a meal, the cause is found,
 He thinks a Loaf will rise to fifty pound
 What made Directors cheat in South-sea year?
 To live on Ven'son when it sold so dear³
 Ask you why Phryne the whole Auction buys?
 Phryne foresees a general Excise
 Why she and Sappho raise that monstrous sum?
 Alas! they fear a man will cost a plum⁴

Wise Peter sees the World's respect for Gold,
 And therefore hopes this Nation may be sold⁵

¹ Sir Gilbert Heathcote (1651–1733), Lord Mayor of London, M P, and Governor of the Bank of England

² See p 154, n ²

³ In the extravagance and luxury of the South-Sea year, the price of a haunch of venison was from three to five pounds P The South-Sea Company collapsed in 1720, spreading financial ruin, after fantastic sums had been realized.

⁴ £100,000

⁵ Peter Walter (d 1745), an attorney who acquired a vast fortune

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Glorious Ambition! Peter, swell thy store,
And be what Rome's great Didius¹ was before
The Crown of Poland, venal twice an age,
To just three millions stinted modest Gage
But nobler scenes Maria's dreams unfold,²
Hereditary Realms, and worlds of Gold
Congenial souls³ whose life one Av'rice joins,
And one fate buries in th' Asturian Mines
Much-injur'd Blunt¹³ why bears he Britain's hate?
A wizard told him in these words our fate
'At length Corruption, like a gen'ral flood,
(So long by watchful Ministers withstood)
Shall deluge all, and Av'rice creeping on,
Spread like a low-born mist and blot the Sun,
Statesman and Patriot ply alike the stocks,
Peeress and Butler share alike the Box,
And Judges job, and Bishops bite the town,
And mighty Dukes pack cards for half-a-crown
See Britain sunk in lucre's sordid charms,
And France reveng'd of ANNE'S and EDWARD'S arms!¹⁴

1 A Roman lawyer, so rich as to purchase the Empire when it was set to sale upon the death of Pertinax P

2 The two persons mentioned were of quality, each of whom in the Mississippi [Scheme] despised to realise above three hundred thousand pounds, the gentleman with a view to the purchase of the crown of Poland, the lady on a vision of the like royal nature They have since retired into Spain, where they are still in search of gold in the mines of the Asturias P

3 Sir John Blunt was one of the first projectors of the South-Sea Company, and afterwards one of the directors and chief managers of the famous scheme in 1720 Whether he did really credit the prophecy here mentioned is not certain, but it was constantly in this very style he declaimed against the corruption and luxury of the age He was patricularly eloquent against avarice in great and noble persons He died in the year 1732 P

"Twas no Court-badge, great Scriv'ner! fir'd thy
brain,
Nor lordly Luxury, nor City Gain
No, 'twas thy righteous end, ashame'd to see
Senates degen'rate, Patriots disagree,
And nobly wishing Party-rage to cease,
To buy both sides, and give thy Country peace.

'All this is madness,' cries a sober sage
But who, my friend, has reason in his rage?
'The Ruling Passion, be it what it will,
The Ruling Passion conquers Reason still'
Less mad the wildest whimsy we can frame,
Than ev'n that Passion, if it has no Aim,
For though such motives Folly you may call,
The Folly's greater to have none at all.

Hear, then, the truth ' 'Tis Heav'n each Passion
sends,
And diff'rent men directs to diff'rent ends
Extremes in Nature equal good produce,
Extremes in Man concur to gen'ral use'
Ask we what makes one keep, and one bestow?
That Pow'r who bids the Ocean ebb and flow,
Bids seed-time, harvest, equal course maintain,
Through reconcil'd extremes of drought and rain,
Builds Life on Death, on Change Duration founds,
And gives th' eternal wheels to know their rounds.

Riches, like insects, when conceal'd they lie
Wait but for wings, and in their season fly
Who sees pale Mammon pine amidst his store,
Sees but a backward steward for the Poor,
This year a Reservoir, to keep and spare,
The next a Fountain, spouting through his Heir,
In lavish streams to quench a Country's thirst,
And men and dogs shall drink him till they burst.

Old Cotta sham'd his fortune and his birth,
 Yet was not Cotta void of wit or worth
 What though (the use of barb'rous spits forgot)
 His kitchen vy'd in coolness with his grot?
 His court with nettles, moats with cresses stor'd,
 With soups unbought and salads bless'd his board?
 If Cotta lived on pulse, it was no more
 Than Bramins, Saints, and Sages did before,
 To crain the Rich was prodigal expense,
 And who would take the Poor from Providence?
 Like some lone Chartreux stands the good old Hall,
 Silence without, and Fasts within the wall,
 No rafter'd roofs with dance and tabor sound,
 No noontide-bell invites the country round
 Tenants with sighs the smokeless tow'r's survey,
 And turn th' unwilling steeds another way
 Benighted wanderers, the forest o'er,
 Curse the sav'd candle, and unop'ning door,
 While the gaunt mastiff growling at the gate,
 Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat

Not so his Son, he mark'd this oversight,
 And then mistook reverse of wrong for right
 (For what to shun will no great knowledge need,
 But what to follow, is a task indeed)
 Yet sure, of qualities deserving praise,
 More go to ruin Fortunes, than to raise
 What slaughter'd hecatombs, what floods of wine,
 Fill the capacious 'Squire, and deep Divine!
 Yet no mean motive this profusion draws,
 His oxen perish in his country's cause,
 'Tis GEORGE and LIBERTY that crowns the cup,
 And Zeal for that great House which eats him up
 The Woods recede around the naked seat,
 The Sylvans groan — no matter — for the Fleet,

MORAL ESSAYS

Next goes his Wool – to clothe our valiant bands,
Last, for his Country's Love, he sells his Lands
To town he comes, completes the nation's hope,
And heads the bold Train-bands, and burns a Pope
And shall not Britain now reward his toils,
Britain, that pays her Patriots with her Spoils –
In vain at Court the Bankrupt pleads his cause,
His thankless Country leaves him to her Laws

The Sense to value Riches, with the Art
To enjoy them, and the Virtue to impart,
Not meanly, nor ambitiously pursu'd,
Not sunk by sloth, nor rais'd by servitude
To balance Fortune by a just expense,
Join with Economy, Magnificence,
With Splendour, Charity, with Plenty, Health,
Oh teach us, BATHURST! yet unspoil'd by wealth!
That secret rare, between th' extremes to move
Of mad Good-nature and of mean Self-love

B To Worth or Want well-weigh'd, be Bounty
giv'n,
And ease, or emulate, the care of Heav'n,
(Whose measure full o'erflows on human race)
Mend Fortune's fault, and justify her grace
Wealth in the gross is death, but life, diffus'd.
As Poison heals, in just proportion us'd
In heaps, like Ambergrise, a stink it lies,
But well-dispers'd, is Incense to the Skies

P Who starves by Nobles, or with Nobles eats?
The Wretch that trusts them, and the Rogue that
cheats
Is there a Lord, who knows a cheerful noon
Without a Fiddler, Flatt'rer, or Buffoon?
Whose table, Wit, or modest Merit share,
Unelbow'd by a Gamester, Pimp, or Play'r?

Who copies Yours, or OXFORD's better part,¹
 To ease th' oppress'd, and raise the sinking heart?
 Where'er he shines, Oh Fortune! gild the scene,
 And Angels guard him in the golden Mean!
 There, English Bounty yet a-while may stand,
 And Honour linger e'er it leaves the land

But all our praises why should Lords engross?
 Rise, honest Muse! and sing the MAN of Ross²
 Pleas'd Vaga echoes through hei winding bounds,
 And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds,
 Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
 From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
 Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
 Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
 But clear and artless, pouring through the plain
 Health to the sick, and solace to the swain
 Whose Causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
 Whose Seats the weary Traveller repose?
 Who taught that heav'n-directed spire to rise?
 'The MAN of Ross' each lisping babe replies
 Behold the Market-place with poor o'erspread!
 The MAN of Ross divides the weekly bread,
 He feeds yon Alms-house, neat, but void of state,
 Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate.
 Him portion'd maids, apprentic'd orphans blest,
 The young who labour, and the old who rest

1 See p. 89, n 1

2 The person here celebrated, who with a small estate actually performed all these good works, and whose true name was almost lost (partly by the title of the Man of Ross, given him by way of eminence, and partly by being buried without so much as an inscription), was called Mr John Kyrle. He died in the year 1724, aged 90, and lies interred in the chancel of the church of Ross, in Herefordshire. P. Kyrle executed his good works by raising subscriptions among his wealthy neighbours.

Is any sick? the **Man** of Ross relieves,
 Prescribes, attends, the med'cine makes, and gives
 Is there a variances enter but his door,
 Balk'd are the Courts, and contest is no more
 Despairing Quacks with curses fled the place,
 And vile Attorneys, now a useless race

B I hrice happy man! enabl'd to pursue
 What all so wish, but want the pow'r to do?
 Oh say, what sumis that gen'rous hand supply?
 What mines, to swell that boundless charity?

P Of Debts, and Taxes, Wife and Children clear
 This man possest — five hundred pounds a year
 Blush, Grandeur, blush! proud Courts, withdraw your
 blaze!

Ye little Stars! hide your diminish'd rays

B And what? no monument, inscription, stone?
 His race, his form, his name almost unknown?

P Who builds a Church to God, and not to Fame,
 Will never mark the marble with his Name
 Go, search it there, where to be born and die,
 Of rich and poor makes all the history,¹
 Enough, that Virtue fill'd the space between,
 Prov'd, by the ends of being, to have been
 When Hopkins dies, a thousand lights attend
 The wretch, who living sav'd a candle's end²
 Should'ring God's altar a vile image stands,
 Belies his features, nay extends his hands,
 That live-long wig which Gorgon's self might own,
 Eternal buckle takes in Parian stone³

1. The Parish Register **P**

2 'Vulture' Hopkins, see p. 152, n. 3

3 The Poet ridicules the wretched taste of carving large periwigs on bustos, of which there are several vile examples in the tombs at Westminster and elsewhere **P**

Behold what blessings Wealth to life can lend!
And see, what comfort it affords our end

In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
With tape-ty'd curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers¹ lies — alas! how chang'd from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!
Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud abode,²
The bow'r of wanton Shrewsbury and love,³
Or just as gay, at Council, in a ring
Of mimick, Statesmen, and their merry King
No Wit to flatter, left of all his store!
No Fool to laugh at, which he valu'd more
There, Victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends
His Grace's fate sage Cutler could foresee,⁴
And well (he thought) advis'd him, 'Live like me'
As well his Grace reply'd, 'Like you, Sir John?
That I can do, when all I have is gone'

1 This lord [George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham], yet more famous for his vices than his misfortunes, having been possessed of about £50,000 a year, and passing through many of the highest posts in the kingdom, died in the year 1687, in a remote inn in Yorkshire, reduced to the utmost misery *P*

2 A delightful palace on the banks of the Thames, built by the Duke of Buckingham *P*

3 The Countess of Shrewsbury, a woman abandoned to gallantries. The Earl, her husband, was killed by the Duke of Buckingham in a duel, and it has been said, that during the combat she held the Duke's horses, in the habit of a page *P*

4 Sir John Cutler (1608?–98), personally parsimonious, yet a public benefactor

Resolve me, Reason, which of these is worse,
 Want with a full, or with an empty purse?
 Thy life more wretched, Cutler, was confess'd,
 Arise, and tell me, was thy death more bless'd?
 Cutler saw tenants break, and houses fall,
 For very want, he could not build a wall
 His only daughter in a stranger's pow'r,
 For very want, he could not pay a dow'r
 A few grey hairs his reverend temples crown'd,
 'Twas very want that sold them for two pound
 What ev'n deny'd a cordial at his end,
 Banish'd the doctor, and expell'd the friend?
 What but a want, which you perhaps think mad,
 Yet numbers feel, the want of what he had!
 Cutler and Brutus, dying both exclaim,
 'Virtue! and Wealth! what are ye but a name!'

Say, for such worth are other worlds prepar'd?
 Or are they both, in this their own reward?
 A knotty point! to which we now proceed
 But you are tir'd – I'll tell a tale –

B

Agreed

P Where London's column,¹ pointing at the skies
 Like a tall bully, lifts the head, and lies,
 There dwelt a Citizen of sober fame,
 A plain good man, and Balaam was his name,
 Religious, punctual, frugal, and so forth,
 His word would pass for more than he was worth
 One solid dish his week-day meal affords,
 An added pudding solemnis'd the Lord's
 Constant at Church, and 'Change, his gains were
 sure,
 His givings rare, save farthings to the poor

1 The Monument, built in memory of the fire of London, with an inscription importing that city to have been burnt by the Papists P

The Dev'l was piqu'd such saintship to behold,
 And long'd to tempt him like good Job of old
 But Satan now is wiser than of yore,
 And tempts by making rich, not making poor

Rouz'd by the Prince of Au, the whirlwinds sweep
 The surge, and plunge his Father in the deep,
 Then full against his Cornish lands they roar,
 And two rich shipwrecks bless the lucky shore

Sir Balaam now, he lives like other folks,
 He takes his chirping pint, and cracks his jokes
 'Live like yourself,' was soon my Lady's word,
 And, lo! two puddings smok'd upon the board

Asleep and naked as an Indian lay,
 An honest factor stole a Gem away
 He pledg'd it to the Knight, the Knight had wit,
 So kept the Di'mond, and the rogue was bit
 Some scruple rose, but thus he eas'd his thought,
 'I'll now give six-pence where I gave a groat,
 Where once I went to church, I'll now go twice –
 And am so clear too of all other vice'

The Tempter saw his time, the work he ply'd,
 Stocks and Subscriptions pour on ev'ry side,
 Till all the Demon makes his full descent
 In one abundant show'r of Cent per Cent,
 Sinks deep within him, and possesses whole,
 Then dubs Director, and secures his soul

Behold Sir Balaam, now a man of spirit,
 Ascribes his gettings to his parts and merit,
 What late he call'd a Blessing, now was Wit,
 And God's good Providence, a lucky Hit
 Things change their titles, as our manners turn
 His Compting-house employ'd the Sunday-morn,
 Seldom at church ('twas such a busy life)
 But duly sent his family and wife

There (so the Devil ordain'd) one Christmas-tide,
My good old Lady catch'd a cold, and dy'd

A Nymph of Quality admires our knight,
He marries, bows at Court, and grows polite
Leaves the dull Cits, and joins (to please the fair)
The well-bred cuckolds in St James's air
First, for his Son a gay Commission buys,
Who drinks, whores, fights, and in a duel dies
His Daughter flaunts a Viscount's tawdry wife,
She bears a Coronet and P — x for life
In Britain's Senate he a seat obtains,
And one more Pensioner St Stephen gains
My Lady falls to play, so bad her chance,
He must repair it, takes a bribe from France,
The House impeach him, Coningsby harangues,¹
The Court forsake him — and Sir Balaam hangs
Wife, son, and daughter, Satan¹ are thy own,
His wealth, yet dearer, forfeit to the Crown
The Devil and the King divide the Prize,
And sad Sir Balaam curses God, and dies

EPISTLE IV

TO RICHARD BOYLE, EARL OF BURLINGTON²*Of the Use of RICHES*

"Tis strange, the Miser should his Cares employ
To gain those Riches he can ne'er enjoy

- 1 Thomas, Earl of Coningsby (1656?–1729), an M P and notable politician
- 2 Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington (1695–1753), statesman, patron of literature and art

Is it less strange, the Prodigal should waste
 His wealth, to purchase what he ne'er can taste?
 Not for himself he sees, or hears, or eats,
 Artists must choose his Pictures, Music, Meats;
 He buys for Topham, Drawings and Designs,¹
 For Pembroke, Statues, dirty Gods, and Coins,²
 Rare monkish Manuscripts for Hearne alone,³
 And Books for Mead, and Butterflies for Sloane⁴
 Think we all these are for himself? no more
 Than his fine Wife, alas! or finer Whore

For what has Virro painted, built, and planted?
 Only to show, how many Tastes he wanted
 What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
 Some Demon whisper'd, 'Visto! have a taste'
 Heav'n visits with a Taste the wealthy fool,
 And needs no Rod but Ripley with a Rule⁵
 See! sportive fate, to punish awkward pride,
 Bids Bubo build, and sends him such a Guide
 A standing sermon, at each year's expense,
 That never Coxcomb reach'd Magnificence!

You show us, Rome was glorious, not profuse,⁶
 And pompous buildings once were things of Use

- 1 A gentleman famous for a judicious collection of drawings *P*
- 2 Thomas Herbert, eighth Earl of Pembroke (1656–1733), statesman
- 3 Thomas Hearne (1678–1735), antiquary
- 4 Two eminent physicians, the one had an excellent library, the other the finest collection in Europe of natural curiosities, both men of great learning and humanity *P*
- 5 This man was a carpenter, employed by a first Minister, who raised him to be an Architect, without any genius in the art, and after some wretched proofs of his insufficiency in public buildings made him Comptroller of the Board of Works *P*
- 6 The Earl of Burlington was then publishing the Designs of Inigo Jones, and the Antiquities of Rome by Palladio *P*

Yet shall (my Lord) your just, your noble rules,
 Fill half the land with Imitating-Fools,
 Who random drawings from your sheets shall take,
 And of one beauty many blunders make,
 Load some vain Church with old Theatric state,
 Turn Arcs of triumph to a Garden-gate,
 Reverse your Ornaments, and hang them all
 On some patch'd dog-hole ek'd with ends of wall,
 Then clap four slices of Pilaster on 't,
 That, lac'd with bits of rustic, makes a Front
 Shall call the winds through long arcades to roar,
 Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door,
 Conscious they act a true Palladian part,
 And if they starve, they starve by rules of art

Ott have you hinted to your brother Peer,
 A certain truth, which many buy too dear
 Something there is more needful than Expense,
 And something previous ev'n to Taste — 'tis Sense
 Good Sense, which only is the gift of Heav'n,
 And though no Science, fairly worth the seven
 A Light, which in yourself you must perceive,
 Jones and Le Nôtre have it not to give¹

To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
 To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,
 To swell the Terrace, or to sink the Grot,
 In all, let Nature never be forgot
 But treat the Goddess like a modest fair,
 Nor over-dress, nor leave her wholly bare,
 Let not each beauty ev'ry where be spy'd,
 Where half the skill is decently to hide
 He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
 Surprises, varies, and conceals the Bounds

1 Inigo Jones, the celebrated architect, and M le Nôtre, the designer of the best gardens in France P

Consult the Genius of the Place in all,
 That tells the Waters or to rise, or fall,
 Or helps th' ambitious Hill the heav'ns to scale,
 Or scoops in circling theatres the Vale,
 Calls in the Country, catches op'ning Glades,
 Joins willing Woods, and varies Shades from Shades,
 Now breaks, or now directs, th' intending Lines,
 Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs

Still follow Sense, of ev'ry art the soul,
 Parts answ'ring parts shall slide into a whole,
 Spontaneous beauties all around advance,
 Start ev'n from Difficulty, strike from Chance,
 Nature shall join you, Time shall make it grow
 A Work to wonder at — perhaps a STOWE¹

Without it, proud Versailles¹ thy glory falls,
 And Nero's Terraces desert their walls
 The vast Parterres a thousand hands shall make,
 Lo! COBHAM comes, and floats them with a Lake
 Or cut wide views through Mountains to the Plain,
 You'll wish your hill or shelter'd seat again
 Ev'n in an ornament its place remark,
 Nor in an Hermitage set Dr Clarke²

Behold Villario's ten-years toil complete,
 His Quincunx darkens, his Espaliers meet,
 The Wood supports the Plain, the parts unite,
 And strength of Shade contends with strength of
 Light,

A waving Glow the blooming beds display,
 Blushing in bright diversities of day,

1 The seat and gardens of Lord Viscount Cobham, in Buckinghamshire *P*

2 Dr S Clarke's bust was placed by the Queen in the Hermitage, while the doctor duly frequented the Court *P* Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), theologian

With silver-quiv'ring rills meander'd o'er —
 Enjoy them, you! Villario can no more,
 Tired of the scene Partires and Fountains yield,
 He finds at last, he better likes a Field

Through his young Woods how pleased Sabinus
 stray'd,

Or sat delighted in the thick'ning shade,
 With annual joy the red'ning shoots to greet,
 Or see the stretching branches long to meet!
 His Son's fine Taste an op'ner Vista loves,
 Foe to the Dryads of his Father's groves,
 One boundless Green, or flourish'd Carpet views,
 With all the mournful family of Yews,
 The thriving plants, ignoble broomsticks made,
 Now sweep those Alleys they were born to shade

At Timon's Villa¹ let us pass a day,
 Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away!'
 So proud, so grand, of that stupendous air,
 Soft and Agreeable come never there
 Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
 As brings all Brobdignag before your thought
 To compass this, his building is a Town,
 His pond an Ocean, his parterre a Down
 Who but must laugh, the Master when he sees,
 A puny insect, shiv'ring at a breeze!
 Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
 The whole, a labour'd Quarry above ground
 Two Cupids squirt before a Lake behind
 Improves the keenness of the Northern wind
 His Gardens next your admiration call,
 On ev'ry side you look, behold the Wall!

1. This was accepted as a description of the Duke of Chandos's seat at Canons See p 131, n 1

No pleasing Intricacies intervene,
 No artful wildness to perplex the scene,
 Grove nods at grove, each Alley has a brother,
 And half the platform just reflects the other
 The suff'ring eye inverted Nature sees,
 Trees cut to Statues, Statues thick as trees,
 With here a Fountain, never to be play'd,
 And there a Summer-house, that knows no shade,
 Here Amphitrite sails through myrtle bow'rs,
 There Gladiators fight, or die in flow'rs,
 Unwater'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
 And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty Urn

My Lord advances with majestic mien,
 Smit with the mighty pleasure, to be seen
 But soft — by regular approach — not yet —
 First thro' the length of yon hot Terrace sweat,
 And when up ten steep slopes you've drag'd your
 thighs,

Just at his Study-door he'll bless your eyes

His Study! with what Authors is it stor'd?²¹
 In Books, not Authors, curious is my Lord,
 To all their dated backs he turns you round,
 These Aldus printed, those Du Sueil has bound!
 Lo some are Vellum, and the rest as good
 For all his Lordship knows, but they are Wood
 For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look,
 These shelves admit not any modern Book

And now the Chapel's silver bell you hear,
 That summons you to all the Pride of Pray'r

1 The false taste in books, a satire on the vanity of collecting them, more frequent in men of fortune than the study to understand them. Many delight chiefly in the elegance of the print or binding, some have carried it so far as to cause the upper shelves to be filled with painted books of wood. *P*

MORAL ESSAYS

Light quirks of Music, broken and uneven,
Make the soul dance upon a Jig to Heav'n
On painted cielings you devoutly stare,
Where sprawl the Saints of Verrio or Laguerre,¹
On gilded clouds in fair expansion lie,
And bring all Paradise before your eye
To rest, the Cushion and soft Dean invite,
Who never mentions Hell to ears polite

But hark! the chiming Clocks to dinner call,
A hundred footsteps scrape the marble Hall
The rich Buffet well-colour'd Serpents grace,
And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face
Is this a dinner? this a Genial room?
No, 'tis a Temple, and a Hecatomb
A solemn Sacrifice, perform'd in state,
You drink by measure, and to minutes eat
So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
Sancho's dread Doctor and his Wand were there
Between each Act the trembling salvers ring,
From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the King
In plenty starving, tantaliz'd in state,
And complaisantly help'd to all I hate,
Treated, caress'd, and tir'd, I take my leave,
Sick of his civil Pride from Morn to Eve,
I curse such lavish cost, and little skill,
And swear no Day was ever past so ill

Yet hence the Poor are cloath'd, the Hungry fed,
Health to himself, and to his Infants bread
The Lab'rer bears What his hard Heart denies,
His charitable Vanity supplies

1 Verrio (Antonio) painted many cielings, etc., at Windsor, Hampton Court, etc., and Laguerre at Blenheim Castle and other places. P

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Another Age shall see the golden Ear
Imbrown the Slope, and nod on the Parterre,
Deep Harvests bury all his pride has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the land

Who then shall grace, or who improve the Soil?
Who plants like BURKE, or who builds like BOYLE
'Tis Use alone that sanctifies Expense,
And Splendour borrows all her rays from Sense.

His Father's Acres who enjoys in peace,
Or makes his Neighbours glad, if he increase
Whose cheerful Tenants bless their yearly toil,
Yet to their Lord owe more than to the soil,
Whose ample Lawns are not ashame'd to feed
The milky heifer, and deserving steed,
Whose rising Forests, not for pride or show,
But future Buildings, future Navies, grow
Let his plantations stretch from down to down,
First shade a Country, and then raise a Town

You too proceed! make falling Arts your care,
Erect new wonders, and the old repair,
Jones and Palladio to themselves restore,
And be whate'er Vitruvius was before ¹
Till Kings call forth th' Ideas of your mind,
(Proud to accomplish what such hands design'd)
Bid Harbours open, public Ways extend,
Bid Temples, worthier of the God, ascend,
Bid the broad Arch the dang'rous Flood contain,
The Mole projected break the roaring Main,
Back to his bounds their subject Sea command,
And roll obedient Rivers through the Land,
These Honours, Peace to happy Britain brings,
These are Imperial Works, and worthy Kings.

1. M Vitruvius Pollio (80 b c) who wrote on architecture

EPISTLL TO DR ARBUTHNOT

BEING THE PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES

P SHU¹, shut the door, good Johnⁿ fatigu'd I
said,

Tye up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead
The Dog-star rages¹ nay, 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land

What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my Thickets, through my Grot they glide,
By land, by water, they encw the charge,
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge
No place is sacred, not the Church is free,
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me
Then from the Mint² walks forth the Man of rhyme,
Happy¹ to catch me, just at Dinner-time

Is there a Parson, much be-inus'd in beet,
A maudlin Poetess, a rhyming Peer,
A Clerk, foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a Stanza, when he should engross?
Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
With desp'rate charcoal round his daiken'd walls?
All fly to Twit^{'NAM}, and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vam
Arthur, whose giddy son ncglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause.
Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses Wit, and Poetry, and Pope

1 John Searle, Pope's servant

2 A sanctuary for insolvent debtors in Southwark

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Friend to my life! (which did not you prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song)
What *Drop* or *Nostrum* can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a Fool's wrath or love?
A dire dilemma¹ either way I'm sped,
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead
Seiz'd and ty'd down to judge, how wretched I?
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie
To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave, exceeds all Pow'r of face
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish, and an aching head,
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, 'Keep your piece nine years'

'Nine years!' cries he, who high in Drury-lane,
Lull'd by soft Zephyrs through the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before *Term* ends,
Oblig'd by hunger, and request of friends
'The piece, you think, is incorrect? why take it,
I'm all submission, what you'd have it, make it'

Three things another's modest wishes bound,
My Friendship, and a Prologue, and ten pound
Pitholeon¹ sends to me 'You know his Grace,
I want a Patron, ask him for a Place'
Pitholeon libell'd me - 'But here's a letter
Informs you, Sir, 'twas when he knew no better
Dare you refuse him? Curl invites to dine,²
He'll write a *Journal*, or he'll turn Divine'

Bless me! a packet - 'Tis a stranger sues,
A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse'

1. The name taken from a foolish poet of Rhodes, who pretended much to Greek *P*

2 Edmund Curl (1675–1747), a notorious bookseller and an enemy of Pope's

EPISIE TO DR ARBUTHNOT

If I dislike it, 'Furies, death and rage'
If I approve, 'Commend it to the Stage'
There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,
The Play is and I are, luckily, no friends
Fir'd that the house reject him, "Sdeath! I'll print it,
And shame the tools - Your int'rest, Sir, with
Lintot "¹

Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much
'Not, Sir, if you revise it, and retouch'
All my demurs but double his attacks,
At last he whispers, 'Do, and we go snacks'
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door,
Sir, let me see your works and you no more.

'Tis sung, when Midas' Ears began to spring
(Midas, a sacred person and a King),
His very Minister who spy'd them first,
(Some say his Queen) was forc'd to speak, or burst.
And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?

A Good friend, forbear! you deal in dang'rous
things

I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or Kings,
Keep close to Ears, and those let asses pruck,
'Tis nothing—

P Nothing? if they bite and kick?
Out with it, DUNCIAD! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an Ass.
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)
The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.

You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, Codrus! round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack.

1 A contemporary bookseller

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Pit, box, and gall 13 in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand st unshook amidst a bursting world
Who shames a Scribbler^r break one cobweb tho',
He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew
Destroy his fib, or sophistry, in vain,
The creature's at his dirty work again,
Thron'd in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines!
Whom have I hurt? has Poet yct, or Peer,
Lost the arch'd eye-brow, or Parnassian sneer?
And has not Colley still his lord, and whore^{r1},
His butchers, Henley,² his free-masons, Moore^{r3}
Does not one table Bavius still admit?
Still to one Bishop, Philips seem a wit^{r4}
Still Sappho—

A Hold! for God-sake — you'll offend,
No Names — be calm — learn prudence of a friend
I too could write, and I am twice as tall,
But foes like these—

P One Flatt'rer's worse than all
Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right,
It is the slaver kills, and not the bite
A fool quite angry is quite innocent
Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they *repent*

One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes
One from all Grubstreet will my fame defend,
And more abusive, calls himself my friend
This prints my *Letters*, that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, 'Subscribe, subscribe'

1 Colley Cibber (1671–1757), actor, dramatist, and poet laureate

2 John Henley (1692–1756), popular preacher and orator

3 James Moore Smyth (1702–34), a poor poet and enemy of Pope.

4 Ambrose Philips (1675–1749), a fine poet, was secretary to the Bishop of Armagh

EPISTLE TO DR ARBUTHNOT

There are, who to my person pay their court
I cough like *Horace*, and, tho' lean, am short,
Ammon's¹ great son one shoulder had too high,
Such *Ovid*'s nose, and, 'Sir! you have an Eye' -
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see,
All that disgrac'd my Bettors, met in me
Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
'Just so immortal *Maro* held his head'
And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great *Homer* died three thousand years ago

Why did I write^r what sin to me unknown
Dipt me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd
The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not
Wife,

To help me through this long disease, my Life,
To second, ARBUTHNOT^t thy Art and Care,
And teach the Being you preserv'd, to bear

But why then publish^r *Granville*² the polite
And knowing *Walsh*,³ would tell me I could write,
Well-natur'd *Garth* inflam'd with early praise,
And *Congreve* lov'd, and *Swift* endur'd my lays,
The courtly *Talbot*, *Somers*, *Sheffield* read,
Ev'n mitred *Rochester* would nod the head,
And *St John's* self (great *Dryden's* friends
before)⁴

With open arms receiv'd one Poet more
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!

1 Alexander the Great 2 See p 2, n 3 3 See p 10, n 1
4 All these were patrons or admirers of Mr Dryden P

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the *Burnets*, *Oldmires*, and *Cooks*¹

Soft were my numbers, who could take offence
While pure Description held the place of Sense?
Like gentle *Fanny's* was my flow'ry theme,
A painted mistress, or a purling stream
Yet then did *Gildon*² draw his venal quill,
I wish'd the man a Dummer, and sat still
Yet then did *Dennis* rave in furious fret,³
I never answer'd – I was not in debt
If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with *Bedlam* or the *Mint*

Did some more sober Critic come abroad,
If wrong, I smil'd, if right, I kiss'd the rod
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From slashing *Bentley* down to piddling *Tibbalds*⁴
Each wight who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each Word-catcher, that lives on syllables,
Ev'n such small Critics some regard may claim,
Preserved in *Milton's* or in *Shakespeare's* name
Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.

1 Authors of secret and scandalous history *P*

2 Charles Gildon (1665–1724), author, and detractor of Pope

3 John Dennis (1657–1734), critic and dramatist

4 Richard Bentley (1662–1742), the great scholar, published a bad edition of Milton Lewis Theobald (1688–1744), scholar, edited Shakespeare and criticised Pope's edition that appeared in 1725

I PISIII TO DR ARBLIHNOT

Were others angry I excus'd them too;
Well nught they rage, I gave them but their due
A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find,
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That Casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify² for who can guess?
The Bard whom pilfer'd Pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half a Crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a
year,

He, who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left
And He, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning
And He, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not Poetry, but prose run mad
All these, my modest Satire bade *translate*,
And own'd that nine such Poets made a *Tate*¹
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!
And swear, not ADDISON² himself was safe

Peace to all such! but were there One whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise,
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer,
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike,

1 Nahum Tate (1652-1715), a dull poet

2 See p 99, n 1

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend,
Dreading ev'n fools, by Flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd,
Like *Cato*, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause,
While Wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if *Arius* were he?

What tho' my Name stood rubric on the walls,
Or plaster'd posts, with claps, in capitals ^{r1}
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers load,
On wings of winds came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the Race that write,
I kept, like *Asian* Monarchs, from their sight
Poems I heeded (now be-rhym'd so long)
No more than thou, great *GEORGE*! a birthday song ²
I ne'er with wits or witlings pass'd my days,
To spread about the itch of verse and praise,
Nor like a puppy, daggled through the town,
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down,
Nor at Rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cry'd,
With handkerchief and orange at my side,
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,
To *Bufo* left the whole Castalian state

Proud as *Apollo* on his forked hill,
Sat full-blown *Bufo*, puff'd by ev'ry quill,
Fed with soft Dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song
His Library (where busts of Poets dead
And a true *Pindar* stood without a head)

1 Booksellers advertised their books by hanging up the title-pages.

2 The laureate addressed a poem to the king on his birthday

EPISITE TO DR ARBUITHNOT

Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,
And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat
Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise,
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind
Dryden alone (what wonder!) came not nigh,
Dryden alone escap'd this judging eve
But still the *Great* have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve

May some choice patron bless each gray-goose
quill!

May every *Batzus* have his *Bufo* still!
So when a Statesman wants a day's defence,
Or Envy holds a whole week's war with Sense,
Or simple pride for flatt'ry makes demands,
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!
Bless'd be the *Great*! for those they take away,
And those they left me, for they left me *GRAY*,¹
Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb
Of all thy blameless life, the sole return
My Verse, and QULENSB'RY² weeping o'er thy urn!

Oh let me live my own, and die so too!

(To live and die is all I have to do)

Maintain a Poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please
Above a Patron, tho' I condescend
Sometimes to call a Minister my friend
I was not born for Courts or great affairs,
I pay my debts, believe, and say my pray'rs,

1. See p 85, n 1

2 See p 145, n 1

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Can sleep without a Poem in my head,
Nor know if *Dennis*¹ be alive or dead

Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light?
Heav'n's! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has Life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
'I found him close with *Swift*² — Indeed, no
doubt

(Cries prating *Balbus*) something will come
out'

'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will
'No, such a Genius never can lie still,'
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first lampoon Sir *Will* or *Bubo* makes
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,
When ev'ry Coxcomb knows me by my *Style*?

Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-ey'd Virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fall'n worth, or Beauty in distress,
Who loves a Lie, lame Slander helps about,
Who writes a Libel, or who copies out
That Fop, whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet, absent, wounds an author's honest fame
Who can *your* merit *selfishly* approve,
And show the *sense* of it without the *love*,
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour, injur'd, to defend,
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray

1 See p 176, n 3

2 See p 89, n 2

LEISURE TO BE ABUSED

Who to the *Dean*, and *silver bell* can swear,¹
And sees at *Cannons* what was never there,
Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
Make Satire a *Lampoon*, and Fiction Lie,
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead
Let *Sporus*² tremble—

A What's that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?
Satire or Sense, alas! can *Sporus* feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

P Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings,
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,
Or at the ear of *Eve*, familiar Toad!
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies
His wit all see-saw, between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis }

¹ Meaning the man who would have the Duke of Chandos that Mr Pope meant him in those circumstances ridiculed in the Epistle on Taste. *P Timon's Villa* was interpreted to be the Duke of Chandos's seat at Canons. See p. 167, n. 1.

² Sporus is John Lord Hervey (1696–1743), courtier, author, and scurrilous defamer of Pope.

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Amphibious thing! that, acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Pop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have express'd,
A Cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust

Not Fortune's worshipper, nor Fashion's tool,
Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool;
Not proud, nor servile, be one Poet's praise,
That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways
That Flatt'ry, even to Kings, he held a shame,
And thought a Lie in verse or prose the same
That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song
That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half-approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit,
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad,
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfehl, the tear he never shed,
The tale revived, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash, and dulness not his own,
The morals blacken'd when the writings' 'scape,
The libell'd person, and the pictur'd shape,
Abuse, on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father, dead,
The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
Perhaps yet vibrates on his Sov'reign's ear —
Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past
For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the last!

A But why insult the poor, affront the great?

P A knave's a knave, to me, in evry state
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at court, or *Japhet*¹ in a jail,
A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire,
It on a Pillory, or near a Throne,
He gain his Prince's ear, or lose his own,

Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit
This dreaded Sat'nist *Dennis*² will confess
Foe to his pride, but Friend to his distress
So humble, he has knock'd at *Tibbald*'s³ door,
Has drunk with *Cibber*,⁴ nay, has rhymed for *Moor*⁵
Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on *Welsted*'s lie⁶
To please his Mistress one aspers'd his life;
He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife
Let *Budget* charge low *Grubstreet* on his quill,⁷
And write whate'er he pleas'd, except his Will,
Let the two *Curly*⁸ of Town and Court abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and muse
Yet why? that Father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbour fool
That harmless Mother thought no wife a whore,
Hear this, and spare his family, *James Moore*¹⁹
Unspotted names, and memorable long!
If there be force in Virtue, or in Song

1 See p 152, n 4 2 See p 176, n 3 3 See p 176, n 4

4 See p 174, n 1 5 See p 174, n 3

6 This man had the impudence to tell in print that Mr P had occasioned a *Lady's death* P

7 Budget, in a weekly pamphlet called the Bee, bestowed much abuse on him P

8 Edmund Curll, the bookseller, see p 99, n 2, and Lord Hervey, the courtier, see p 181, n 2 9 See p 174, n 3

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Of gentle blood (part shed in Honour's cause,
While yet in *Britain* Honour had applause)
Each parent sprung —

A What fortune, pray —

P Their own,

And better got, than *Bestia's* from the throne
Born to no Pride, inheriting no Strife,
Nor marrying Discord in a noble wife,
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious through his age
No Courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dar'd an Oath, nor hazarded a Lie
Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
No language but the language of the heart
By Nature honest, by Experience wise,
Healthy by temp'rance, and by exercise,
His life, tho' long, to sickness past unknown,
His death was instant, and without a groan,
O grant me, thus to live, and thus to die!

Who sprung from Kings shall know less joy than I

O Friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!

Be no unpleasing Melancholy mine
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing Age,
With lenient arts extend a Mother's breath,
Make Languor smile, and smooth the bed of Death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep a while one parent from the sky!
On cares like these, if length of days attend,
May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a QUEEN¹

A. Whether that blessing be deny'd or giv'n,
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heav'n

¹ Arbuthnot had been physician to Queen Anne

SATIRES AND EPISTLES OF HORACE IMITATED

THE SECOND SATIRE OF THE SECOND BOOK OF HORACE

TO MR BETHEL¹

WHAT, and how great, the Virtue and the Art
To live on little with a chearful heart,
(A doctrine sage, but truly none of mine)
Let's talk, my friends, but talk before we dine,
Not when a gilt Buffet's reflected pride
Turns you from sound Philosophy aside,
Not when from plate to plate your eye-balls roll,
And the brain dances to the mantling bowl

Hear BETHEL's Sermon, one not versed in schools,
But strong in sense, and wise without the rules

Go, work, hunt, exercise! (he thus began)
Then scorn a homely dinner, if you can
Your wine lock'd up, your Butler stroll'd abroad,
Or fish deny'd (the river yet unthaw'd),
If then plain bread and milk will do thefeat,
The pleasure lies in you, and not the meat

Preach as I please, I doubt our curious men
Will choose a pheasant still before a hen,
Yet hens of Guinea full as good I hold,
Except you eat the feathers green and gold
Of carps and mullets why prefer the great,
(Tho' cut in pieces ere my Lord can eat)
Yet for small Turbots such esteem profess?
Because God made these large, the other less

Oldfield,² with more than Harpy throat endu'd,
Cries, 'Send me, Gods! a whole Hog barbecue'd!'

1 Hugh Bethel (d. 1748), one of Pope's earliest friends

2 A notable glutton who is supposed to have spent £1,500 a year
on good food.

Oh, blast it, South-winds! till a stench exhale
 Rank as the ripeness of a rabbit's tail
 By what Criterion do ye eat, d'ye think,
 If this is priz'd for sweetness, that for stink -
 When the tu'd glutton labours through a treat,
 He finds no relish in the sweetest meat,
 He calls for something bitter, something sour,
 And the rich feast concludes extremely poor
 Cheap eggs, and herbs, and olives still we see,
 Thus much is left of old Simplicity!

The Robin-red-breast till of late had rest,
 And children sacred held a Martin's nest,
 Till Beccaficos¹ sold so dev'lish dear
 To one that was, or would have been, a Peer
 Let me extol a Cat, on oysters fed,
 I'll have a party at the Bedford-head,²
 Or ev'n to crack live Crawfish recommend,
 I'd never doubt at Court to make a friend

'Tis yet in vain, I own, to keep a pother
 About one vice, and fall into the other
 Between Excess and Famine lies a mean,
 Plain, but not sordid, tho' not splendid, clean

Avidien, or his Wife (no matter which,
 For him you'll call a dog, and her a bitch)
 Sell their presented partridges, and fruits,
 And humbly live on rabbits and on roots
 One half-pint bottle serves them both to dine,
 And is at once their vinegar and wine
 But on some lucky day (as when they found
 A lost Bank-bill, or heard their Son was drown'd)
 At such a feast, old vinegar to spare,
 Is what two souls so gen'rous cannot bear

1. The Italian name for a small migratory bird

2. A famous eating-house *P*

IMITATIONS OF HORACE

Oil, tho' it stink, they drop by drop impart,
But sowse the cabbage with a bounteous heart

He knows to live, who keeps the middle state,
And neither leans on this side, nor on that,
Nor stops, for one bad cork, his butler's pay,
Swears, like Albutius, a good cook away,
Nor lets, like Naevius, ev'ry error pass,
The musty wine, foul cloth, or greasy glass

Now hear what blessings Temperance can bring
(Thus said our Friend, and what he said I sing)
First Health The stomach (cramm'd from ev'ry dish,
A tomb of boil'd and roast, and flesh and fish,
Where bile, and wind, and phlegm, and acid jar,
And all the man is one intestine war)
Remembers oft the School-boy's simple fare,
The temprate sleeps, and spirits light as air

How pale each Worshipful and Rev'rend guest
Rise from a Clergy or a City feast!
What life in all that ample body, say?
What heav'nly particle inspires the clay?
The Soul subsides, and wickedly inclines
To seem but mortal, ev'n in sound Divines

On morning wings how active springs the Mind
That leaves the load of yesterday behind!
How easy ev'ry labour it pursues!
How coming to the Poet ev'ry Muse!
Not but we may exceed, some holy time,
Or tir'd in search of Truth, or search of Rhyme,
Ill health some just indulgence may engage,
And more the sickness of long life, Old age,
For fainting Age what cordial drop remains,
If our intemperate Youth the vessel drains?

Our fathers prais'd rank Ven'son You suppose,
Perhaps, young men! our fathers had no nose

Not so a Buck was then a week's repast,
 And 'twas their point, I ween, to make it last,
 More pleas'd to keep it till their friends could come,
 Than eat the sweetest by themselves at home
 Why had not I in those good times my birth,
 Ere coxcomb-pies or coxcombs were on earth?

Unworthy he, the voice of Fame to hear –
 That sweetest music to an honest ear –
 (For, faith, Lord Fanny! you are in the wrong,
 The world's good word is better than a song,)
 Who has not learn'd, fresh sturgeon and ham-pie
 Are no rewards for want, and infamy!
 When Luxury has lick'd up all thy pelf,
 Curs'd by thy neighbours, thy trustees, thyself,
 To friends, to fortune, to mankind a shame,
 Think how posterity will treat thy name,
 And buy a rope, that future times may tell
 Thou hast at least bestow'd one penny well

'Right,' cries his Lordship, 'for a rogue in need
 To have a Taste is insolence indeed
 In me 'tis noble, suits my birth and state,
 My wealth unwieldy, and my heap too great'
 Then, like the Sun, let Bounty spread her ray,
 And shine that superfluity away
 Oh Impudence of wealth! with all thy store,
 How dar'st thou let one worthy man be poor?
 Shall half the new-built churches round thee fall?
 Make Quays, build Bridges, or repair Whitehall
 Or to thy Country let that heap be lent,
 As M**o's¹ was, but not at five per cent
 Who thinks that Fortune cannot change her mind,
 Prepares a dreadful jest for all mankind

1. The Duchess of Marlborough was reported to lend money to the Government at a great interest.

IMITATIONS OF HORACE

And who stands safest tell me, is it he
That spreads and swells in puff'd Prosperity,
Or blest with little, whose preventing care
In peace provides fit arms against a war?

Thus B I H I I spoke, who always speaks his thought,
And always thinks the very thing he ought
His equal mind I copy what I can,
And as I love, would imitate the Man

In South-Sea¹ days not happier, when surmis'd
The Lord of Thousands, than if now *Excis'd*,
In forest planted by a Father's hand,
Than in five acres now of rented land
Content with little, I can piddle here
On brocoli and mutton, round the year,
But ancient friends (tho' poor, or out of play)
That touch my bell, I cannot turn away.

'Tis true, no Turbots dignify my boards,
But gudgeons, flounders, what my Thames affords
To Hounslow-heath I point, and Bansted-down,
Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own
From yon old walnut-tree a show'r shall fall,
And grapes, long ling'ring on my only wall,
And figs from standard and espalier join,
The Dev'l is in you if you cannot dine
Then cheerful healths (your Mistress shall have
place)

And, what's more rare, a Poet shall say Grace

Fortune not much of humbling me can boast,
Tho' double tax'd, how little have I lost?
My Life's amusements have been just the same,
Before and after Standing Armies came
My lands are sold, my father's house is gone;
I'll hire another's, is not that my own,

1 See p 153, n 3.

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

And yours, my friends? through whose free-op'ning
gate
None comes too early, none departs too late,
(For I, who hold sage Homer's rule the best,
Welcome the coming, speed the going guest)
'Pray Heav'n it last!' (cries SWIFT¹) 'as you go on,
I wish to God this house had been your own
Pity! to build, without a son or wife
Why, you'll enjoy it only all your life'
Well, if the use be mine, can it concern one,
Whether the name belong to Pope or Vernon?
What's *Property*, dear Swift? You see it alter
From you to me, from me to Peter Walter,²
Or, in a mortgage, prove a Lawyer's share,
Or, in a jointure, vanish from the heir,
Or in pure equity (the case not clear)
The Chanc'ry takes your rents for twenty year
At best, it falls to some ungracious son,
Who cries, 'My father's damn'd, and all's my own'
Shades, that to BACON could retreat afford, .
Become the portion of a booby Lord,
And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's³ delight,
Slides to a Scriv'ner or a city Knight
Let lands and houses have what Lords they will,
Let Us be fix'd, and our own masters still

1 See p 89, n 2

2 See p 153, n 4

3 See p 160, n 1

IMITATIONS OF HORACE

THE FIRST EPISILO OF THE FIRST
BOOK OF HORACE

TO LORD BOLINGBROKE¹

SI JOHN, whose love indulg'd my labours past,
Matures my present, and shall bound my last¹
Why will you break the Sabbath of my days?
Now sick alike of Envy and of Praise
Public too long, ah let me hide my Age!
See Modest Cibber² now has left the Stage.
Our Gen'rals now, retir'd to their Estates,
Hang their old Trophies o'er the Garden gates,
In Life's cool Ev'ning satiate of Applause,
Nor fond of bleeding, ev'n in Brunswick's cause
A Voice there is, that whispers in my ear,
('Tis Reason's voice, which sometimes one can hear)
'Friend Pope! be prudent, let your Muse take breath,
And never gallop Pegasus to death,
Lest, stiff and stately, void of fire or force,
You limp, like Blackmore on a Lord Mayor's horse '³
Farewell, then, Verse, and Love, and ev'ry Toy,
The Rhymes and Rattles of the Man or Boy,
What right, what true, what fit we justly call,
Let this be all my care - for this is All
To lay this harvest up, and hoard with haste
What ev'ry day will want, and most, the last

1 See p. 119, n. 1 2 See p. 174, n. 1

3 The name of this heavy poet, however problematical elsewhere, was universally received in the city of London. His versification is here exactly described, stiff, and not strong, stately and yet dull, like the sober and slow paced animal generally employed to mount the Lord Mayor and therefore here humorously opposed to Pegasus. P

But ask not, to what Doctors I apply,
 Sworn to no Master, of no Sect am I
 As drives the storm, at any door I knock
 And house with Montaigne now, or now with Locke
 Sometimes a Patriot, active in debate,
 Mix with the World, and battle for the State,
 Free as young Lyttelton,¹ her Cause pursue,
 Still true to Virtue, and as warm as true
 Sometimes with Aristippus, or St Paul,
 Indulge my candor, and grow all to all,
 Back to my native Moderation slide,
 And win my way by yielding to the tide

Long, as to him who works for debt, the day,
 Long as the Night to her whose Love's away,
 Long as the Year's dull circle seems to run,
 When the brisk Minor pants for twenty-one
 So slow th' unprofitable moments roll,
 That lock up all the Functions of my soul,
 That keep me from myself, and still delay
 Life's instant business to a future day
 That task, which, as we follow, or despise,
 The eldest is a fool, the youngest wise
 Which done, the poorest can no wants endure,
 And which not done, the richest must be poor

Late as it is, I put myself to school,
 And feel some comfort not to be a fool
 Weak though I am of limb, and short of sight,
 Far from a Lynx, and not a Giant quite,
 I'll do what Mead and Cheselden advise,²
 To keep these limbs, and to preserve these eyes
 Not to go back, is somewhat to advance,
 And men must walk at least before they dance

1 George Lyttelton (1709-73), poet and politician

2 Two well-known contemporary physicians

IMITATIONS OF HORACE

Say, does thy blood rebel, thy bosom move
With wretched A'rice, or as wretched Love?
Know, there are Words and Spells which can
control

Between the Fits this Fever of the Soul
Know, there are Rhymes, which, fresh and fresh
apply'd,

Will cure the arrant'st Puppy of his Pride
Be furious, envious, slothful, mad, or drunk,
Slave to a Wife, or Vassal to a Punk,
A Switz, a High-dutch, or a Low-dutch Bear,
All that we ask is but a patient Ear

'Tis the first Virtue, Vices to abhor
And the first Wisdom, to be Fool no more
But to the world no bugbear is so great,
As want of Figure, and a small Estate
To either India see the Merchant fly,
Scared at the spectre of pale Poverty!
See him, with pangs of body, pangs of soul,
Burn through the Tropic, freeze beneath the Pole!
Wilt thou do nothing for a nobler end,
Nothing, to make Philosophy thy friend?
To stop thy foolish views, thy long desires,
And ease thy heart of all that it admires?

Here, Wisdom calls 'Seek Virtue first, be bold!
As Gold to Silver, Virtue is to Gold'
There, London's voice 'Get Money, Money still!
And then let Virtue follow, if she will'
This, this the saving doctrine, preach'd to all,
From low St James's up to high St Paul,
From him whose quill stands quiver'd at his ear,
To him who notches sticks¹ at Westminster

1 Exchequer tallies, an old method of reckoning in the Exchequer.

Barnard¹ in spirit, sense, and truth abounds,
 'Pray then, what wants he?' Fourscore thousand
 pounds,

A Pension, or such Harness for a slave
 As Bug now has, and Dormant would have
 Barnard, thou art a Cit, with all thy worth,
 But Bug and D'l, then *Honours*, and so forth

Yet ev'ry child another song will sing,
 'Virtue, brave boys! 'tis Virtue makes a King'
 True, conscious Honour is to feel no sin,
 He's arm'd without that's innocent within,
 Be this thy Screen, and this thy Wall of Brass,
 Compar'd to this, a Minister's an Ass

And say, to which shall our applause belong,
 This new Court-jargon, or the good old song?
 The modern language of corrupted Peers,
 Or what was spoke at CRESSY and POITIERS?
 Who counsels best? who whispers, 'Be but great,
 With Praise or Infamy leave that to fate,
 Get Place and Wealth, if possible, with grace,
 If not, by any means get Wealth and Place'
 For what? to have a Box where Eunuchs sing,
 And foremost in the Circle eye a King
 Or he, who bids thee face with steady view
 Proud Fortune, and look shallow Greatness through
 And, while he bids thee, sets th' Example too?
 If such a Doctrine, in St James's air,
 Should chance to make the well-drest Rabble stare,
 If honest S*z take scandal at a Spark,
 That less admires the Palace than the Park
 Farth, I shall give the answer Reynard gave
 'I cannot like, dread sir, your Royal Cave

}

¹ Sir John Barnard (1685–1764), M P and Lord Mayor of London

IMITATIONS OF HORACE

Because I see, by all the tracks about,
Full many a Beast goes in, but none comes out.'
Adieu to Virtue, if you're once a Slave:
Send her to Court, you send her to her grave.

Well, if a King's a Lion, at the least
The People are a many-headed Beast:
Can they direct what measures to pursue,
Who know themselves so little what to do?
Alike in nothing but one Lust of Gold,
Just half the land would buy, and half be sold:
Their Country's Wealth our mightier Misers drain,
Or cross, to plunder Provinces, the Main;
The rest, some farm the Poor-box, some the Pews;
Some keep Assemblies, and would keep the Stews;
Some with fat Bucks on childless Dotards fawn;
Some win rich Widows by their Chine and Brawn;
While with the silent growth of ten per cent.,
In dirt and darkness, hundreds stink content.

Of all these ways, if each pursues his own,
Satire, be kind, and let the wretch alone:
But show me one who has it in his pow'r
To act consistent with himself an hour.

Sir Job sail'd forth, the ev'ning bright and still,
'No place on earth' (he cry'd) 'like Greenwich hill?' }
Up starts a Palace, lo, th' obedient base }
Slopes at its foot, the woods its sides embrace, }
The silver Thames reflects its marble face. }
Now let some whimsy, or that Dev'l within, }
Which guides all those who know not what they mean, }
But give the Knight (or give his Lady) spleen; }
'Away, away! take all your scaffolds down,
For Snug's the word: My dear! we'll live in Town.'

At am'rous Flavio is the stocking thrown?
That very night he longs to lie alone.

The Fool, whose Wife elopes some thrice a quarter,
For matrimonial solace dies a martyr.

Did ever Proteus, Merlin, any witch,
Transform themselves so strangely as the Rich ?
Well, but the Poor – The Poor have the same itch;]
They change their weekly Barber, weekly News,
Prefer a new Japanner to their shoes,
Discharge their Garrets, move their beds, and run
(They know not whither) in a Chaise and one;
They hire their sculler, and when once aboard,
Grow sick, and damn the climate – like a Lord.

You laugh, half Beau, half Sloven if I stand;
My wig all powder, and all snuff my band;
You laugh, if coat and breeches strangely vary,
White gloves, and linen worthy Lady Mary!¹
But when no Prelate's Lawn with hair-shirt lin'd
Is half so incoherent as my Mind,
When (each opinion with the next at strife,
One ebb and flow of follies all my life)
I plant, root up; I build, and then confound;
Turn round to square, and square again to round;
You never change one muscle of your face,
You think this Madness but a common case,
Nor once to Chanc'ry, nor to Hale² apply;
Yet hang your lip, to see a Seam awry!
Careless how ill I with myself agree,
Kind to my dress, my figure, not to Me.
Is this my Guide, Philosopher, and Friend?
This, he who loves me, and who ought to mend?
Who ought to make me (what he can, or none),
That Man divine whom Wisdom calls her own;

1. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762); authoress and wit,
beauty yet a sloven.

2. Dr Richard Hale (1670–1728); studied insanity.

IMITATIONS OF HORACE

Great without Title, without Fortune bless'd;
Rich ev'n when plunder'd, honour'd while oppress'd;
Lov'd without youth, and follow'd without pow'r;
At home, tho' exil'd; free, tho' in the Tow'r;
In short, that reas'ning, high, immortal Thing,
Just less than Jove, and much above a King,
Nay, half in heav'n – except (what's mighty odd)
A Fit of Vapours clouds this Demi-God.

FROM

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF THE SECOND
BOOK OF HORACE
TO AUGUSTUS

OF little use the Man you may suppose,
Who says in verse what others say in prose;
Yet let me show, a Poet's of some weight,
And (tho' no Soldier) useful to the State.
What will a Child learn sooner than a song?
What better teach a Foreigner the tongue?
What's long or short, each accent where to place,
And speak in public with some sort of grace?
I scarce can think him such a worthless thing,
Unless he praise some Monster of a King;
Or Virtue or Religion turn to sport,
To please a lewd or unbelieving Court.
Unhappy Dryden! – in all Charles's days,
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays;
And in our own (excuse some Courtly stains)
No whiter page than Addison remains.
He from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,
And sets the Passions on the side of Truth,

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest art,
And pours each human Virtue in the heart.
Let Ireland tell, how Wit upheld her cause,
Her Trade supported, and supplied her Laws;
And leave on SWIFT this grateful verse ingrav'd,
'The Rights a Court attack'd, a Poet sav'd.'
Behold the hand that wrought a Nation's cure,
Stretch'd to relieve the Idiot and the Poor,
Proud Vice to brand, or injur'd Worth adorn,
And stretch the Ray to Ages yet unborn.
Not but there are, who merit other palms;
Hopkins and Sternhold glad the heart with psalms:
The Boys and Girls whom Charity maintains,
Implore your help in these pathetic strains:
How could Devotion touch the country pews,
Unless the Gods bestow'd a proper Muse?
Verse cheers their leisure, Verse assists their work,
Verse prays for Peace, or sings down Pope and Turk.
The silenc'd Preacher yields to potent strain,
And feels that Grace his pray'r besought in vain;
The blessing thrills through all the lab'ring throng,
And Heav'n is won by Violence of Song.

FROM THE
EPILOGUE TO THE SATIRES
THE PROGRESS OF VICE

VIRTUE may choose the high or low Degree,
'Tis just alike to Virtue, and to me;
Dwell in a Monk, or light upon a King,
She's still the same below'd, contented thing.
Vice is undone, if she forgets her Birth,
And stoops from Angels to the Dregs of Earth:
But 'tis the *Full* degrades her to a Whore;
Let *Greatness* own her, and she's mean no more;
Her Birth, her Beauty, Crowds and Courts confess,
Chaste Matrons praise her, and grave Bishops bless;
In golden Chains the willing World she draws,
And hers the Gospel is, and hers the Laws,
Mounts the Tribunal, lifts her scarlet head,
And sees pale Virtue carted in her stead.
Lo! at the wheels of her Triumphal Car,
Old England's Genius, rough with many a Scar,
Dragg'd in the dust! his arms hang idly round,
His Flag inverted trails along the ground!
Our Youth, all liv'ry'd o'er with foreign Gold,
Before her dance: behind her, crawl the Old!
See thronging Millions to the Pagod run,
And offer Country, Parent, Wife, or Son!
Hear her black Trumpet through the Land proclaim,
That **NOT TO BE CORRUPTED IS THE SHAME!**
In Soldier, Churchman, Patriot, Man in Pow'r,
'Tis Av'rice all, Ambition is no more!
See, all our Nobles begging to be Slaves!
See, all our Fools aspiring to be Knaves!

POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

The Wit of Cheats, the Courage of a Whore,
Are what ten thousand envy and adore!
All, all look up with reverential Awe,
At Crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the Law:
While Truth, Worth, Wisdom, daily they decry —
'Nothing is Sacred now but Villany.'

Yet may this Verse (if such a Verse remain)
Show, there was one who held it in disdain.

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